

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

North Cerney Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

North Cerney,
Cirencester,
Gloucestershire
GL7 7BZ

Diocese of Gloucester

Local authority: Gloucestershire
Date of inspection : 7th March 2007
Date of last inspection : 21st May 2002
School's URN: 115640
Name of Headteacher: Mrs. B. Goodrich
SIAS inspector : Mrs Muriel Griffiths, NS268

Context

North Cerney is a small rural primary school and children are taught in two classes with several age groups in each class. The school serves the local village and also accepts a number of pupils from other villages and the nearby town of Cirencester. Most children are from white British backgrounds. The school is set in the heart of the village with attractive grounds and imaginatively designed play areas.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of North Cerney as a Church of England school are outstanding

North Cerney Church of England Primary School is an outstanding church school. Christian values underpin every aspect of the life of the school.

Established strengths

- The active Christian ethos of the school that informs the values and aspirations of all those within the school community.
- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher who is well supported by governors and a very committed staff team.
- The quality of relationships between all members of the school community.

Focus for development

- Make the school's Church of England foundation still more evident by furthering, the already strong, links with the local church.
- Develop assessment in Religious Education further, so that children know which skills they are developing and how to improve their work.

The school has identified the above as areas for development in their self evaluation.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners

The school family is very clear about what makes this an outstandingly distinctive church school and are proud to be part of it. There is a very strong commitment to the development of the whole child within the context and environment of an extremely supportive school community. Pupils flourish as individuals, feeling valued, special and supported in their learning. There are excellent relationships throughout the school, which ensure respect and aid the good learning that takes place. Collective worship, Religious Education and the strong Christian ethos support the spiritual, moral and social development of pupils and as a result, children behave well and show care and concern for one another. Pupils' spiritual learning is developed throughout the whole curriculum. They describe the school as a 'happy place – it's like a big family'. Children particularly appreciate the weekly celebration assembly and the many other rewards that are given for good work and thoughtfulness. Pupils demonstrate a clear sense of personal responsibility and are actively involved in decision making about their own learning and the future of the school. There are very good opportunities for pupils to 'have a voice' through the School Council and the fact that their ideas, such as to have the football field levelled, are acted upon is much appreciated by the children. Many opportunities are taken to help children to think of those less fortunate than themselves, for example, 'Operation Christmas Child'. The school also works with local Senior Citizens who visit for lunch and on other occasions. Christian signs and symbols are evident in the school and displays showing what the children have been learning in Religious Education make clear that the school has a Christian foundation. An attractive display shows photographs of the youngest children acting out their own modern version of the parable of 'The Lost Coin'. Play areas have been developed to encourage co-operative play and healthy lifestyles. The school has twice been awarded the 'Healthy Schools Status'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship plays a fundamental part in the life of the school. The School's Christian values are fully and consistently reinforced through the daily act of worship. Major church festivals such as Harvest, Christmas and Easter are celebrated in church and children talk enthusiastically about the Easter Walk that happens each year. They remember making their 'Easter Gardens' and taking them into the local wood and leaving them there as decorations for their parents to see later. Pupils especially enjoy the regular participation by the 'Open the Book' team for a weekly Bible story assembly, when the Rector also visits. Pupils learn about Bible stories, the Church year, religious traditions and Christian values through a carefully planned programme of worship. In a very good act of worship observed during the inspection, pupils were thinking about how Mary, the mother of Jesus, trusted in God and focused on what that meant for her. They sang enthusiastically and joined in the Lord's Prayer after a time of reflection about the words of this special prayer. The quiet relaxed atmosphere in the hall meant that pupils readily joined in with different elements of worship and children from all year groups held props to assist with the telling of the story. Pupils recognise the importance and value of prayer in a variety of situations knowing that it is a means by which to communicate with God. For example, at lunchtime, each table links hands as they say the grace that they have chosen to say together to give thanks for their food. Acts of worship are recorded and evaluated in order to look for ways to make these special times even more meaningful.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding.

The outstanding leadership of the school as a church school gives it clear purpose and direction. The headteacher and governors ensure that the church foundation is at the heart of the school and are pro-active in developing this dimension of the school. Adults are all good role models and provide direction for high expectations of behaviour and care and respect for individuals. The headteacher, governors and staff have a very good relationship with the wider

church community who support the school in a variety of ways. Foundation governors contribute very strongly to the life of the school. They provide pastoral support and act as 'critical friends'. There is a regular page of school news in the Parish Magazine with contributions from the children. For example, children wrote about the visit of artist, Andy Goldsworthy, and the pieces that they had made using natural materials. Very positive relationships exist between all members of the school community and there are mutually supportive links between the school and the church. For example, the School Choir is currently practising 'Seek Ye First' to sing in church for the Mothering Sunday service. The school has a notice board outside the church and members of the worshipping congregation help in school by, for example, hearing readers or answering the phone when no-one is available in the school office. The partnerships between the school, the Church and the local community are very good but these are being taken further forward with the recently produced 'Parish Plan'. The subject leader for Religious Education is effective in her role and has ensured that all teachers are confident with the recently introduced syllabus. She is now focusing on the school's assessment procedures so that they are in line with the revised planning, based on the new syllabus. Pupils are becoming more aware of the greater church family through visits to Gloucester Cathedral for Leavers' Services and other events. The whole school community is involved in school improvement with a special day set aside to focus on evaluation and thinking about how the school can move forward.

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