

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Norton Fitzwarren Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Blackdown View,
Norton Fitzwarren,
Taunton
TA2 6YB

Diocese: Bath and Wells

Local authority: Somerset County
Dates of inspection: 14th January 2009
Date of last inspection: April 2007
School's unique reference number: 123798
Headteacher: Mrs Bernie Dennis
Inspector's name and number: Mrs Janet Bond - 247

School context

Norton Fitzwarren Church of England School has 70 children within the age range 4 to 11 years. The majority of children are White British and come from the local village and the local Royal Marine Commando Base. In the last five years there have been 4 headteachers including the current locum headteacher. Most of the current staff and governing body have been recently appointed.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Norton Fitzwarren Church of England Primary School as a Church school is satisfactory

Norton Fitzwarren is a satisfactory church school with some good features. The school provides a very caring and supportive Christian atmosphere where all feel valued and special. Links with the local church and rector are very good and they are very supportive of the school. The monitoring and evaluation of religious education and collective worship are not rigorous enough and more emphasis needs to be placed on the spiritual development of the pupils.

Established strengths

- Children's Christian care and concern for others and their ability to work cooperatively
- Children's self confidence and their very good relationships, which are effectively underpinned by the school's Christian values
- Very good links with the local parish church

Focus for development

- Plan for a greater emphasis on spiritual development across the curriculum
- Organise assessment strategies to inform planning in religious education
- Develop more formal monitoring of the impact of collective worship on the whole school community

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is satisfactory in the way it meets the needs of all learners

Children are confident, happy, secure and well behaved, reflecting the Christian values of the school. They are self confident and caring of each other because of the strong emphasis placed on this throughout the school. Children enjoy the challenge of taking responsibilities, such as through the effective school council. As one child said "We like to get things done". They know their views are taken seriously and acted upon and delight in expressing these through, for example, the school newspaper that they edit. Children apply themselves well in lessons because they are made relevant and fun although some children could extend the quality and range of their work. Children are proud of the new 'Celebrating me' books which contain their certificates for a range of good work, behaviour and personal development.

Children have a strong moral code reflecting the emphasis placed on this in the school's Christian aims. However, opportunities provided for spiritual development through the very rich creative curriculum are not fully exploited. Children show their care and concern for others through their choice of charities to work for and support, locally, nationally and internationally. Parents say their children enjoy school and many comment on the family atmosphere that gives the children a sense of identity and security. Religious education lessons are well planned to be relevant to the age range of the class and children learn aspects of the Anglican tradition and also of other faiths. Displays are effectively used to promote the Christian identity of the school and to reinforce children's understanding. For example, the delightful display of pictures and writing from children of 'What I think God looks like'. As one child wrote, "I think God is billions of years old, kind and probably wrinkly".

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Worship has an important place in the everyday life of the school because it is made relevant to the children and because it reinforces the Christian aims and values of the school. Children understand that worship is a special time and this is effectively reinforced by the use of a special table with a cross and a candle. Appropriate music supports children entering acts of worship quietly and respectfully. Children listen carefully, are keen to participate and all join in the response, "To show that Jesus is the light of the world", when asked, "Why do we light the candle?". At present children and visitors from other denominations and faiths do not lead worship and the school recognises this as an area for development. Children say they enjoy the weekly act of worship led by the Rector which helps them develop a relevant understanding of Anglican traditions. Children talk enthusiastically about their worship in Church to celebrate the key Christian festivals and the importance of these occasions is reinforced by the attendance of parents. Children write their own prayers for use at special times and every classroom has a worship area where children's thoughts and writings are displayed. Currently there are no systems for formally monitoring and evaluating the impact of collective worship.

The leadership and management of the school as a church school is satisfactory

The headteacher, supported by the governors, shares and promotes a strong Christian vision for the school. She sees this Christian vision and ethos as important in promoting the school within the community and is taking appropriate practical steps to facilitate this. The chair of governors and the rector are effectively supporting the foundation governor who, together with a number of other governors, is new to the school. Therefore their role in monitoring the impact of this vision is yet to be fully developed. Governors visit school regularly and, with training and support, are strengthening their role as 'critical friend'. Very good and effective links between the Church and the school are supporting the promotion of the Christian ethos within the school and the wider community. Staff are considering how to build on and extend children's prior learning, but assessment for religious education is in the early stages of development. The school has established effective communication systems with parents who are now actively involved in working groups and whose views are sought and often integrated. Parents say their children are happy at school. They particularly appreciate the family atmosphere together with the care and consideration shown to their children.