

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Pinhoe Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School,

Harrington Lane,
Pinhoe
Exeter,
Devon,
EX4 8PE

Diocese: Exeter

Local authority: Devon

Date of inspection: July 5th 2007

Date of last inspection: July 25th & 28th 2001

School's unique reference number: 113445

Headteacher: Mr. Stewart Gale

Inspector's name and number: Mrs. Jenny Petridge (153)

School context

The school is situated in an urban environment on the East side of Exeter. It is located in a new building, which opened in September 2006. A new Headteacher and a new Incumbent were also appointed in 2006. The school has 370 learners on roll, who come from a mixed socio-economic background. The school works in partnership with an Exeter Special School. Three percent of learners have English as an additional language. There is a high degree of mobility of learners and some have challenging behaviour.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Pinhoe Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, as a Church of England school are satisfactory.

The transition to a new building, in addition to a new senior management team, means that staff, governors and learners are addressing challenging issues. The good, effective leadership and management of the Headteacher are enabling learners to "co-operate, achieve, respect and enjoy". The partnership with the Church, through the new Incumbent and established Foundation governors, is making a positive impact on the Christian distinctiveness of the school.

Established strengths

- The dynamic leadership and management of the Headteacher, who has a clear vision for raising standards, through the CARE ('Co-operate, Achieve, Respect and Enjoy') initiative.
- The enthusiasm and support of the Foundation governors and Clergy to re-define the partnership between the Church and the school.
- The initiatives introduced by the subject leader to improve the standard of religious education.

Focus for development

- Create a formal strategy for the planning, monitoring and evaluation of both the Christian distinctiveness of the school and the spiritual development of learners and staff.
- Make explicit links between the CARE initiative and Christian values.
- Write a policy for collective worship, which reflects the school's current practice, and introduce a long term rolling programme.
- Ensure that the management of religious education includes monitoring the tasks for learners, and the time allocation for the subject, across the Key Stages.

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

Learners are happy and enjoy the new school building, especially the 'pods', (small teaching areas off the main corridor) as they provide "space for quiet learning". Learners know and understand the new CARE initiative, and this is making an impact on the levels of behaviour in the school. The School Council currently meets infrequently, and Key Stage 2 learners would like to have more involvement in decision-making. Christian values are implicit in the CARE approach; however, no explicit references are made to the Christian foundation of the school. Relationships between learners, and between staff and learners are good. A period of necessary changes during the last year has presented teachers and other staff with challenges. A commitment by all staff to the well being and attainment of learners is resulting in progress. The pastoral support of staff by the Foundation governors is making a positive impact. There is no policy for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Therefore, there is no strategy for planning, monitoring and evaluating these opportunities across the curriculum. However, there are examples of planned opportunities for spiritual development in the 3 religious education lessons observed. The quality of displays, with a focus on encouraging spiritual development, is satisfactory, with some examples of good practice. For example, a board for learners to write their prayers, in the foyer, is providing an opportunity for learners to reflect. Prayer is a regular part of the collective worship programme. However, other opportunities for prayer in the life of the school are underdeveloped. Prayers are not said before lunch or at the end of the day. Learners were not able to quote The Lord's Prayer, although some said they had heard it. There are plans for providing a quiet garden and an adventure play area will be completed shortly. These features in the outdoor environment are 'work in progress' and are satisfactory.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

The impact of collective worship is satisfactory overall. Collective worship is benefiting from a review, which took place in 2006 / 2007. The act of worship observed was good. The use of a puppet and the dramatic telling of the story of Gideon resulted in a good level of learner and staff enjoyment. This contributed to the good behaviour of the learners. Clear reference was made to the fact that 'God is in control' and that 'God can take the small things and make them into amazing things'. This provided learners with opportunities for spiritual development. Learners enjoy acts of collective worship, especially the variety of experiences provided. Collective worship is recognised as being a significant part of school life. However, the policy is currently still under review. The school has a 1-year plan for collective worship. The Headteacher has identified the need to increase this level of planning, which is currently insufficient. The hall currently presents limited opportunities to create a special atmosphere. The senior management team have identified the need to develop a sense of 'sacred space', by increasing a range of resources, including window blinds. Currently, there are no symbolic, or actual references to the Church of England foundation of the school in the hall. Governors have been involved in monitoring worship, but this is in its infancy. Learners are not yet making explicit links between Christian values as experienced in worship, and the CARE approach. Learners do not experience a Eucharist service, either in the school or the Church.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory.

The subject of religious education is in a transitional phase. The Diocesan Scheme of Work has been taught for several years, and whilst identifying areas of good practice, the audit of religious education in 2006 / 2007 highlighted two main areas for development. These are assessment, and monitoring and evaluation. The subject leader, supported by the Headteacher, is introducing an early monitoring strategy. There is no evidence for a

comparison of religious education with other core subjects. Currently, it is not possible to track learners' progress due to the lack of assessment evidence. The school encourages an experiential approach to religious education, including assessment, in line with the Diocesan scheme of work. However, the school has not monitored and evaluated these tasks and their outcome sufficiently for the Summer term. The subject leader is collating photographic evidence of work prepared for displays. There is also photographic evidence of learning, which did not require written outcomes. The subject leader piloted a topic approach to religious education in Key Stage 1 using 'Our World – Harvest and Creation' as a focus, in the Autumn term. This was successful, and reflects the school's developing move to a skills-based, topic approach in the curriculum. However, the senior management team are committed to protecting the clear identity of religious education and its time allocation in both Key Stages 1 and 2. The subject is led with enthusiasm and the subject manager has received professional development opportunities through attending in-service training, and by leading staff training for colleagues. Learners experience opportunities for creativity in religious education. This enables them to express their feelings, for example, through movement, in the Foundation Stage, after hearing the story of "Wonderful Earth". The use of bells and a drum enabled learners to explore the links between sound and movement. In a Key Stage 2 class, learners had an opportunity to consider the significance of names, followed by learning about the names of God. In a Key Stage 1 class, learners experienced opportunities to imagine their own special place. Good practice included the involvement of the teaching assistant in the questioning process. As a result, the contributions of learners with special educational needs were valued. The responses of learners were valued and praised. The teacher made links between the responses and the learning objectives. There was good evidence in Key Stage 2, of learners' work on comparing Hymns, Psalms and Sikh Bhajans. However, learners' knowledge of other faiths, apart from aspects of Christianity and Judaism, is limited in both Key Stages.

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

The Headteacher has made a very significant impact on behaviour and standards in the school. The good level of behaviour is now apparent in lessons and in collective worship. The challenges presented by initiating change have been managed effectively. The Headteacher and Deputy together have led the staff in the raising of standards. Their partnership and complementary management styles have encouraged staff to embrace change. Following this year of dramatic change, the Headteacher has identified the need to review the schools' Christian ethos and distinctiveness. The Headteacher is approaching this review with energy and commitment. Religious education is included in the School Improvement Programme, and is regularly monitored and evaluated by the Headteacher. Currently, there is no strategy for leading and managing the overall provision of opportunities for spiritual development, across the whole life of the school, involving all stakeholders. Whilst daily acts of collective worship and end of term services provide some opportunities for the spiritual development of staff, there is currently no provision for retreats or quiet days for extended staff reflection, during this time of change. The contribution of the Foundation governors and the Chair of governors, to the Christian ethos of the school are good. The new Incumbent has a clear vision for the ways in which the partnership between the school and the Church can encourage a vibrant and relevant relationship. Currently there is an implicit understanding of the school's Church of England foundation. This is not yet articulated fully in the Church / school partnership.