

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Ruardean Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

School Road,

Ruardean,

Glos.

GL17 9XQ

Diocese of Gloucester

Gloucestershire LA

Date of inspection: 4 October 2006

Date of last inspection: 6 June 2000

School's URN: 115647

Name of Headteacher: Mrs Jane Watkinson

Inspector: Miss Christine Hammant, NS009

Context

Ruardean Church of England Primary School is located in a rural mixed village community with some indicators of below average social and economic circumstances. Most pupils in the four class school come from the village. A Communication and Interaction Centre based at the school serves the surrounding area. Its pupils, who all have statements of special educational needs, are on the school roll and integrated into the life of the school. Their needs relate to the Autism Spectrum Disorder.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ruardean as a Church of England school are good

Ruardean C of E Primary School is a good church school where there is a strong emphasis on learners' spiritual growth and personal development.

Established Strengths

- A strong Christian ethos demonstrated by all staff in their supportive and caring attitudes to pupils and each other.
- A clear focus on Christian values in the planning and implementation of collective worship.
- An acknowledgement of the power of prayer in the life of the school.

Focus for development

- Reflect with greater emphasis and more effectively the distinctive Christian character of the school in its public image.
- Strengthen systems of evaluation and monitoring to inform planning in collective worship and spiritual development.
- Introduce aspects of Anglican worship to collective worship in school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ruardean Primary School as a Church of England School are good.

Personal interactions between members of the school community are good. Individuals are seen as special, unique and made in the image of God. Learners are made to feel of worth and encouraged to explore and develop their potential. They recognise the Christian qualities in their teachers and feel that school is a happy place for them. They have good levels of self-esteem and self-confidence, are polite and helpful. Children demonstrate empathy and are open in their questions about death, particularly in relation to the recent death of a child in the school. The Christian values of friendship, love, acceptance and forgiveness permeate relationships enabling personal development and progress in learning to take place. On entry to school standards learners achieve are below average. On transfer to secondary education significant progress and improvement have been made. Learners speak with confidence about God, his love for them and their beliefs. They make good progress in spiritual awareness and have a strong sense of morality, social awareness and cultural diversity. This is demonstrated through the links with a school in Kenya. Pupils and staff alike feel their views are listened to, and they receive support when needed. A group of staff meet regularly to pray for issues raised by them and the children. Talking to God is a part of life in school. Learners understand that conflicts need to be dealt with appropriately but know there is always forgiveness. Displays in classrooms and in the hall illustrate work in religious education and values in collective worship. There are quiet places to sit outside but inside places for children to pray and reflect are not specifically provided. The external aspect of the building and the Prospectus do not proclaim sufficiently well the Christian foundation and values which are embedded in the work and relationships of the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.

Whilst the centrality of worship in the life of the school is not made explicit in the prospectus or the worship policy, it is clearly evident in practice. Worship is planned and delivered effectively. Staff, governors and pupils have begun to record evaluations of collective worship. Learners understand the importance of worship and the opportunities it provides for praising God and prayer. They found worship helped them understand about the death of a pupil and to focus on happy memories. They talked of peace, beauty and friendship as values they had learnt about in worship. Pupils see themselves as created by God and everyone as special. Learners' spiritual development is fostered and nurtured in worship and they speak with ease about God. All staff were present in worship and, when necessary, supported children with special needs. Learners behaved well, were attentive, took part eagerly as requested and sang with enthusiasm. The atmosphere was calm and respectful and there was a short time of reflection. Parents and governors attend weekly and special acts of worship in school and the parish church. The content and timing of acts of worship is matched well to the needs of all learners, including those from the Centre. The Christian values being explained in worship are also a focus for work in PSHCE. Spiritual development is an important aspect of all areas of the curriculum in policy and planning. Recording the evaluation of spiritual development across the curriculum has not been fully put in place. The school celebrates key Christian festivals in the church year. Pupils are in the process of learning the Lord's Prayer. They do not use any Anglican liturgy or responses. Worship is distinctly Christian. Learners are familiar with the parish church for worship and for work in RE. There are strong links with the church through the foundation governors.

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

Parents, teachers and governors acknowledge the importance of the distinctive Christian vision of the school promoted by the head teacher and foundation governors. This is expressed well in the school policies and the life of the school but not as effectively in the public image of the school, as portrayed in the Prospectus and the external aspect of the building. Parents speak with confidence of the Christian ethos of the school and the effective and supportive nature of the school community. They feel their views are valued. They emphasise the willingness of the head teacher and staff to be available to them. Parents value the involvement of the school in the village community and the school's friendly and welcoming atmosphere. The chair of governors has shared in evaluating the school as a church school with the head teacher. The full governing body has not been involved in this self-evaluation. The School Development Plan identifies issues for collective worship most of which have been addressed. Staff have attended RE and collective worship training courses and are very aware of the focus on spiritual development across the curriculum. They acknowledge the leadership and vision of the head teacher, and enjoy working in the caring, family atmosphere created in the school. They share in leading worship and enjoy teaching RE. The staff prayer group has proved to be a powerful support to staff and children. The beautiful setting in which the school is situated inspires and encourages staff, giving them opportunity for personal reflection. The most recently appointed staff member found the induction to the school's Christian character helpful and effective. The parish church is the only worshipping community in Ruardean but children do learn of other Christian churches in the link with Kenya. They also attend the Year 6 Leavers' Service each year at Gloucester Cathedral.

SIAS report October 2006 Ruardean Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
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