

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Salcombe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Onslow Road
Salcombe
Devon
TQ8 8AG

Diocese: Exeter

Local authority: Devon
Dates of inspection: September 25th 2007
Date of last inspection: July 2006
School's unique reference number: 113405
Headteacher: Miss Sue Warne
Inspector's name and number: Mr Andrew Rickett 201

School context

Salcombe CE Primary School is a smaller than average school with 67 children on roll. Most children come from the immediate village with a mix of social and economic backgrounds and are from a white British heritage. The number of children with educational difficulties is in line with the national average. The headteacher took up the substantive post in September 2006. A new vicar begins his appointment in January 2008 following a long interregnum.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Salcombe Primary as a Church of England School are satisfactory

During the challenging circumstances of the past year, the school has never lost sight of the fact that its Christian values are a crucial part of the school ethos. This has given them the strength to implement measures successfully to raise standards throughout the school, which have in turn had a positive impact on the personal development of each child.

Established strengths

- Care for the whole school community which is at the core of the school ethos.
- Children's enjoyment of learning.
- A real commitment to enhance the impact of the school's distinctive Christian character.

Focus for development

- Identify and develop the school's distinctive Christian vision and its impact on the learning and personal development of all children.
- Develop the role of foundation governors.
- Provide opportunities for children to experience greater cultural diversity in Britain.

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

The decision by the school to improve the quality of teaching and learning is evidence of the emphasis placed on the care of individuals at Salcombe. Each child is thereby given a greater chance to make progress in their work. This has been successful with children making better progress and attaining satisfactory standards. The school is now in the process

of identifying how the school's Christian character can have an even greater impact on learning. Good teaching was seen in all lessons. In particular, the school makes clever use of its environment. For example, in one RE lesson the youngest children used real fish as a starting point for understanding the idea of Jesus as a fisher of men. In a village that has a fishing community this was something to which the children could readily relate. Older children were given opportunities to explore their feelings and emotions as they discussed their reactions to passages from the Bible. Lessons were delivered at a good pace with well prepared resources and learning strategies that engaged the children's attention. The school recognises that this good quality of teaching will take time to have a measurable impact on the progress in the children's learning. Children speak of their time at school as enjoyable and as a safe place being among friends and adults who are there to help them. They are comfortable in talking about their beliefs and know that their opinions will be listened to with respect. It is something the school has worked hard to develop and was demonstrated when a child had the confidence and openness to speak of her difficulty in understanding God's place in her life. Children are proud to belong to the School Council with the important part it plays in the work the school does to raise money for charities both local and further afield. Children appreciate the spectacular setting of their school but the ability to look beyond the immediate community to wider cultural diversity needs to be encouraged.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Children and parents recognise that collective worship is an important part of school life because it makes a significant contribution towards establishing the Christian ethos. This is reflected in the views of the children as they are able to recognise that messages given in worship encourage them to follow Jesus' example. This was confirmed in an act of worship where 'sharing' was the theme. Children instinctively understood the importance of sharing virtues such as love, honesty and truth which should come before the sharing of material objects such as toys. Underpinning all acts of worship are passages of scripture which are used to explain how we can learn from the way that Jesus led His life. Prayer is an important part of worship and extends into other areas of school life as well. Children understand that prayer can be used to speak to God to ask for His help or to say thank you. This has a good impact on their spiritual development. The children's grasp of how prayer can be used was explained by one child who said that things can be said in prayer that may be hard to say to other people. The introduction, by the new Headteacher, of a cross and lighted candle has now become part of the worship pattern and this has helped children to understand that worship is a special time. Opportunities are given for reflection on the message and with guidance almost all children take this opportunity to be still. Attitudes are positive and there has been increased enjoyment of worship because more thorough planning means that the themes are both significant and relevant to the children. In the parish church special festivals are marked through the Christian year. The Lay Reader leads these occasions and she takes similar care to make sure that the message is accessible to all.

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

The headteacher has a clear understanding of how the school's Christian character can make a distinctive difference to the lives of the children. This is evident in the passion with which she talks about her vision and portrays how she can lead the school in turning this into a reality. At the last inspection, the school decided that the most urgent need was to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Measures to do this have been successfully introduced and are having a positive impact on children's learning. This has meant that the school's wish to redefine what it means to be a Christian school has not been started. The overall progress with the school's self evaluation process is therefore satisfactory because this initiative still has to take place. The school regards this as a crucial part of its future development and is confident that when complete it will provide the means through which the school can enhance the impact of its Christian character on the children's learning. With the new headteacher, together with an enthusiastic new chair of governors, new foundation governors and the

imminent arrival of a new vicar, the school is well placed to begin this process. Consultation on this issue is already an important part of the school's improvement plan. There is a great enthusiasm and excitement about this aspect of the school's development which is reflected in the committed way people talk about the future plans and their willingness to be involved. Despite the long interregnum, links with the church community have continued to grow because of the dedication of the headteacher and members of the church community. The Lay Reader regularly leads worship and is keen to be a part of the school's future. The closeness of the links is shown in the way that members of the church come to school for lunch with the children every month. They sit and talk with the children and the ease of the relationship is a reflection of how much a part of the community they are. The RE Coordinator has a good grasp of the subject. She is successfully planning the implementation of the new syllabus over a two year rolling programme and has built in comprehensive procedures to monitor and evaluate its impact. Parents fully support the school ethos and say that their children are very happy and enjoy coming to school. Parents of children who are new to the school say that they appreciate just how quickly their children have found friends and been made welcome.

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