

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Sapperton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Sapperton,
Cirencester,
Glos.
GL7 6LQ

Diocese of Gloucester

LA: Gloucestershire

Date of inspection: 18 October 2006

Date of last inspection: 28th and 29th January 2003

School's URN: 115698

Name of Headteacher: Mrs Dawn Thomas

Inspector: Miss Christine Hammant NS009

Context

Sapperton Church of England Primary School is a small village school near Cirencester. The school serves a wide area including two other local villages and is currently oversubscribed. Almost all pupils come from white British backgrounds. No pupils qualify for free school meals and the proportion of children who are disabled or have special educational needs is below average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Sapperton Primary School as a Church of England School is good.

Established strengths

- Emphasis is placed on the importance and value of every individual in the school.
- There are strong links with the local churches.
- Christian values and a caring ethos are woven into both learning and relationships.

Focus for development

- Review the school Prospectus and notices, so that the distinctive Christian character of the school is a key feature.
- Identify opportunities for planning and evaluating spiritual development in subject areas across the curriculum.
- Review assessment in religious education to include levelling children's work for both attainment targets and adjust planning to address this and to raise standards.
- Record planning for collective worship and collate and develop the evaluation processes for collective worship.

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

Learners feel valued and special. They enjoy their work, often talking about it with enthusiasm at home. They are secure and happy in school. The Christian values of the school are reflected well in the courtesy, care and respectful behaviour of the children. They have good levels of self-esteem and are confident and independent. Parents speak with confidence of the social, moral and spiritual development of their children in school. Learners show compassion and responsibility. However, spiritual development is not formally monitored and evaluated. Children are able to relate positively and with interest to the beliefs and feelings of others. The staff of the school work closely together as a team giving each other support and encouragement. Disagreements, which are few, are resolved in a professional and open manner. Some staff speak with assurance about the importance of their faith in their role in school. Religious education and the Christian value in focus for the term are included in classroom displays, which are bright, colourful and thought provoking. There is very little room for interactive displays or quiet reflective

spaces inside or outside the building due to the room sizes and the small playground. Daily prayer takes place in collective worship and in class when children and adults can share a brief moment of quiet. Children talk of the friendliness of the school and the good advice they are given as they prepare to move to their next school. They feel they are taught to respect the environment. They understand they 'should not only think about poor children in England, but in Africa and Afghanistan as well'. The School Council organises charity fund raising. The children are proud of their school and what they do and learn there. Christian values permeate relationships within the school and the community it serves. The school Prospectus does not effectively or fairly reflect the distinctive Christian character of the school.

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

Worship occupies a central place in the life of the school. Christian values are at the core of collective worship. The school's recording for its planning and evaluation of collective worship lacks depth and co-ordination. The 'Assembly Group' from the local churches do, however, make very useful records of their plans and note evaluations to inform future plans when they lead collective worship. Governors report back to the governing body when they observe worship but pupils are not involved in any evaluation. Collective worship provides good opportunities for spiritual development though very little time is provided for children to reflect in silence. They listen with interest to stories in worship and engage eagerly with questions and answers. Their responses reveal an understanding of the importance of God in their lives. The behaviour of learners is good, particularly as they have to fit snugly into the limited space available for worship. They sing beautifully. All staff attend and share in worship which is matched well to the children's ability and background. The children are able to recite the Lord's Prayer and write their own prayers. They speak enthusiastically of the Christian festivals celebrated at the local churches and in school. Parents are invited and attend all these special services. A Eucharist service is celebrated each term. Learners speak confidently about attending services in church and generally find them easy to understand. As members of a church school they are proud to attend a church and see it as a privilege other children may not enjoy. Some children stated that they actively encourage their parents to attend church. Children speak comfortably about and to God and are inspired by the wonders of His creation. This is demonstrated in the beautiful batik of the creation story they have made. This, with a lighted candle, is used as a worship focus.

The effectiveness of religious education is satisfactory.

Whilst the standard of work in RE is comparable to that of other subjects, planning and evaluation of RE does not focus sufficiently well on both attainment targets. Assessment data varies in quality and lacks consistency. Children's work is not levelled and marking does not address lesson objectives. The school uses the new locally Agreed Syllabus applicable to the Foundation stage, Key Stage One and Key Stage Two. Learners are enthusiastic about RE and talk about their learning at home. Some look up stories in their own Bibles. Progress in RE across the stages is secure and lessons observed were good. Most children enjoy RE lessons and behaviour is good. Older KS2 children studying Hinduism were able to understand Hindu beliefs and compare these effectively with Christian beliefs. Children are encouraged to investigate and reflect on events in daily life in RE. They often bring newspaper articles to school, which focus on topics raised and are eager to discuss these. Most learners respond to the challenge of relating RE to their own lives. They learn about contemporary Christian people and recognise the importance of religion in the lives of believers. This provides opportunities to develop insight and spirituality. Learners have a satisfactory or better understanding of the Christian faith and Anglican tradition. The school provides 5% curriculum time for RE and the subject is sufficiently well resourced. The subject leader is not provided with any time to develop the subject in addition to PPA time. RE is generally recognised as a priority subject in the life of the school for, as well as teaching the Agreed Syllabus, it also provides opportunities to refer to and enhance the Christian values in focus in collective worship.

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

Whilst the majority of the stakeholders speak of the school's Christian vision, this is not evident in most public documentation particularly the Prospectus. The school's mission statement omits reference to the school as a church school. The head teacher acknowledges the centrality of worship in the life of the school but this does not appear in any documents. She speaks with confidence about learners' familiarity with prayer. She sees the importance of Christian values as an aspect of life in school. She is well supported by the chair of governors who takes an active part in delivering acts of worship in school and at church. The church prays regularly for the school. In relationships between all members of the school community there is a strong emphasis on Christian values. The head teacher consulted with key staff and the chair of governors in the self-evaluation of the school as a church school. The full governing body was not involved in this process. The introduction by the school leaders of the 'Values for Life' resources has improved the quality of provision for worship and has addressed school development aims regarding improving pupils' behaviour. This resource was introduced into the school as a direct result of a staff member's professional development. Governors have signed up to a training course on the distinctive Christian character of a church school. Parents confirm they receive questionnaires about various issues in school and feel their opinions contribute to decision making. The school has good links with the local Anglican churches, which serve the villages where the children live. There are no other Christian worshipping communities in Sapperton with whom the school could make links. Year six pupils attend the leavers' service held in Gloucester cathedral each year.

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