

Whitminster Endowed Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

School Lane
Whitminster
Gloucestershire
GL2 7PJ

Diocese of Gloucester

Gloucestershire LEA
SIAS inspection: 7th December 2005
Previous S23 inspection: 7th March 2000
URN: 115660
Headteacher: Miss K Cunningham
SIAS Inspector NS#118: Mr Colin French

Context

Whitminster C of E Primary School is set in a rural area and draws the majority of its pupils from the local community. Several of its pupils come from travelling families. Two of the classrooms together with the library and IT facility are housed in temporary classrooms. The school's hall is small and its size limits the activities for which it can be used.

Summary Judgement

Whitminster School is a very good school with a strong Christian foundation and ethos. It makes good provision for the inclusion of all learners. In its Self Evaluation Form the school presents a clear over all view of itself. However, the SEF does not do justice to the Christian beliefs and values that were evident during the inspection and that are a feature of the school.

Established strengths

The school has maintained and further developed its strengths as recognised in the previous inspection.

- The school provides a secure, calm and caring environment in which pupils feel safe and valued.
- The school makes good provision for the needs of all its learners.
- The school works with determination to maintain and develop its Christian ethos.

Focus for development

In addition to consolidating its current successes and achievements and in order to overcome the restrictions imposed by limited space and facilities on collective worship and the wider curriculum :-

- The school should continue to work, with the LEA, in order to bring to fruition the existing plans to extend and develop their buildings.

How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, meets the needs of all its learners very well.

The school makes good provision for the needs of all its pupils. Great care and thought is taken to ensure that those pupils who come with a travelling background feel included at all times. Together with those learners having special needs, they are provided with every opportunity to enable them to achieve their full potential. Vulnerable children are supported by clear, well thought out written policies. It was evident from discussion with the learners that they felt well cared for by all the staff. This was reflected by the pupils' attitude to the staff. One suggestion from a member of the school council was that this report should include a "big thank you to the teachers". Relationships within the school community are very good. The children showed respect and care for one another. Behaviour was very good. One foundation pupil was very anxious to explain to the inspector that "we follow the school rules". Pupils felt that they were involved in developing the rules either through their class or the school's council. Mindful of its Christian foundation the school places emphasis upon RE and collective worship as the main vehicle to promote spiritual development. However, the role of the wider curriculum in offering opportunity for spiritual development is not overlooked. There was ample evidence in the pupils' work, writing, behaviour and attitudes of a developing awareness and understanding of the world about them.

What is the impact of Collective Worship on the school community?

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

It was evident from discussion with staff and foundation governors that collective worship is very important in the life of the school. The support and guidance of the incumbent has ensured that collective worship within the school is firmly Christian and reflects the Anglican tradition. There is appropriate planning, monitoring and evaluation of collective worship in place. This includes evaluation by the pupils. Parents attend the seasonal services held in the parish church. Although limited by space, provision is now being made for the occasional attendance of parents during collective worship in the school hall. Discussion with pupils confirmed that they had a very positive attitude towards collective worship. The pupils' comments about "assemblies" included such terms as "fun", "Interesting", "time to worship God", "thoughtful" and "enjoyment". The act of worship observed during the inspection was very good containing all the appropriate elements of praise, thanksgiving, prayer and reflection. Pupils were fully involved and responded well. The act of worship concluded with the school's own prayer and made a valuable contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. The worship co-ordinator was able to demonstrate the accuracy of her evaluative judgements in discussion with the inspector after this act of worship.

How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?

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

The outstanding enthusiasm and leadership of the head teacher has made a very significant impact upon the school. The effect of the strong partnership that exists between the church and the school can be seen in the commitment to maintaining and developing its Christian ethos. Through the on-going review of school policies the staff and governors are able to monitor their success in building upon their vision. Links with the parish church are good and the school plays an active role in the community. Parents expressed support for the school's association with the church. They are appreciative of the school's qualities but do not necessarily attribute them to the school's Christian foundation. The school's brochure and other policy documents make very clear that the school is built upon Christian values. The governors and staff have rightly identified in the school's SEF that they need to overcome the inadequacies of the hall and temporary classrooms. However, plans are in hand to address this issue.

SIAS DECEMBER 2005 Whitminster Endowed CE VC Primary School, Glos. GL2 7PJ