

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Shaw cum Donnington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Love Lane,
Donnington,
Newbury
RG14 2JG

Diocese: Oxford

Local authority: West Berkshire

Dates of inspection: 26th March 2007

Date of previous inspection: July 2005

School's unique reference number: 109974

Headteacher: Mr JK Watts

Inspector's name and number: Gillian Allison 142

School Context

This is a popular small school on the edge of Newbury. Pupils are mainly White British and come from a variety of backgrounds.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Shaw-cum-Donnington as a Church of England school are good

This is a good church school with a long tradition of service to the community, strengthened by a supportive partnership with the local church. The caring ethos is underpinned by Christian values which recognise the uniqueness of each child.

Established strengths

- the school's commitment to its caring ethos
- the active involvement of clergy and church members in school life
- the pleasant school environment which enhances spiritual development

Focus for development

- extend evaluation of worship to take account of pupils' views and review current planning
- build self evaluation of the church school into whole school development planning

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

The strength of the school lies in its emphasis on creating a happy environment which is open and welcoming to all. The majority of pupils come from outside the designated area, attracted by the school's reputation for friendliness and care. Families of all faith commitment and none feel that the church school is inclusive of all in the community. Christian principles underpin the aims and are modelled by all adults. Children reflect the caring attitude in their treatment of one another, older children "looking out" for younger pupils and pupils welcoming newcomers. Children are happy to come to school. Self worth is good because their achievements are celebrated and they are encouraged to take responsibility from an early age. They feel safe because people treat one another with respect and any matters of concern are treated seriously. They understand the school's values which are discussed in worship, PHSE, RE and through the curriculum. They enjoy the range of extra curricular activities which enhance their personal development, one of which, the lunchtime Jaffa Club, is run by the church funded youth worker. Spiritual and moral development is good. Children and staff care for the attractive school environment, sharing decisions about the garden development. School Council ensures that pupils' views are represented and members are proud of differences they have made to the playground and healthy living stances. Displays of RE are imaginatively executed and children can discuss them with insight. The school's emphasis on the development of the whole child is mirrored in photographs of the whole school's enjoyment of a snowy day.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

The school uses a variety of settings and groupings for collective worship, giving thought to the ages and needs of different pupils. This means that most children see the relevance of worship to their own lives. Planning also takes account of Christian festivals, reflecting the school's religious foundation and enhancing understanding of the RE curriculum. During Key Stage 2 worship pupils sang "Lord of The Dance" and demonstrated understanding of links to the Easter story. They also showed their enthusiasm for singing, which is a popular part of the school's music programme. Children respond appropriately in worship, especially for special occasions like the Joint Infants and Preschool Easter Service in the parish church. The youngest children in school behaved in a responsible manner, setting the example to preschoolers with their quiet, thoughtful behaviour and their very good singing. Year 2 pupils spoke appreciatively of the stained glass and drew attention to the stained glass in their own school, making the links between the two places and the spiritual attributes of both. Most children can articulate the purpose of reflection time and what it means to them. They enjoy making their own contributions and would like more opportunities to take the lead. Leaders evaluate individual acts of worship and adults, including governors, contribute ideas but little has been done to collect pupils' views of worship.

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

The headteacher successfully promotes an open inclusive ethos, based on Christian principles, which is key to the school's popularity. Governors are proud of this ethos, and see that they have a duty to sustain it. Using the Toolkit, they have undertaken productive self evaluation of the church school, identifying strengths and areas to develop to reinforce the ethos. So the development of religious education, for example, is already a focus, with support for the new coordinator's training. This useful start can now be reinforced by drawing the distinctive areas of church school development into whole school development planning. Long established and fruitful links with the local church are a good feature of this church school. Both school and church have a shared vision of service and this has been central to the working relationship between headteacher and rector over many years. This results in trust and mutual respect, with good pastoral and practical support for the school. The church's commitment is exemplified by the assistant priest's role as chaplain and the school's response which is to build her contribution into development planning. The school uses the church building in a meaningful way, for worship and for curriculum purposes, but above all for pupils' spiritual development. Foundation governors, who are active members of the church community, bring significant support to the school through governance, by encouraging the partnership between school and parish and with practical activities, such as the cycling proficiency course.

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