

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Sherborne Abbey Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Lenthay Road
Sherborne
Dorset
DT9 6AQ

Diocese: Salisbury

Local Authority: Dorset
Date of inspection: 9th April 2008
Date of last inspection: July 2002
School's Unique Reference Number: 113766
Headteacher: Mr Lyn Stockham
Inspector's name and NS number: Mr Chris Williamson 290

School context

Sherborne Abbey Church of England Primary School is a purpose built primary school which has 240 children on roll. Most children are from the local area. Approximately 23% of children attend from outside the school's catchment area, which demonstrates its popularity. There are 26% of the children on the Special Needs Register, 1% of the children are from ethnic minority groups and 6% are entitled to free school meals. The rate of mobility amongst children is high. Approximately half of the governors were new to the school last year.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Sherborne Abbey Primary School as a Church of England school are good

The distinctiveness of Sherborne Abbey School is demonstrated by the importance placed on the Christian values of care and mutual respect which results in strong support for the personal development of each individual child. The dedication and commitment of the headteacher, staff and governors, together with the strong links with the church, mean that the school is well placed to improve further.

Established strengths

- The welcoming, friendly atmosphere created in the school as a result its Christian ethos where each child is valued and feels valued
- The mutual respect shown between all stakeholders
- The positive response shown by children to collective worship

Focus for development

- To develop the effectiveness of systems to monitor the school as a church school
- To develop further strategies to evaluate the school as a church school
- To extend the range of opportunities to enhance children's spiritual development

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

Children enjoy school and they feel valued and special. The learning environment offers children a safe and secure place in which to learn. Christian values, evident in the life of the school, have a positive impact on the children. The school works hard to meet the needs of all children, for example children with special needs are enabled to make good progress because of the wide range of strategies used by the school. Children appreciate the opportunities provided for their spiritual development which are rooted in Christian values, for example children value the times of reflection that exist within collective worship. Children understand 'right' and 'wrong', based on Christian teaching. As a result behaviour is good throughout the school and children say they feel happy. Children show respect for each

other. They have good levels of self esteem. Children are able to relate positively to the beliefs and feelings of others. Children also demonstrate a Christian concern for the wider community through fund raising and practical support. For example children benefit from exchanging letters with their link school in Ghana. Children work collaboratively and cooperatively and many are able to talk openly about their beliefs. Good relationships exist throughout the school and these are based on Christian values. Children are proud of their school. The Christian character of the school is evident in displays, signs and symbols; these are used effectively both to encourage children's spiritual development and to support their wider learning.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is important in the life of the school and demonstrates its Christian character. The school celebrates a number of the key Christian festivals. Children respond well to collective worship and value the variety of styles of worship. Children say that they are particularly enthusiastic about worship when it is led by each class, on a weekly basis. A number of parents appreciate the opportunity both to support their children and to participate in worship on these occasions. Children value the opportunities that are provided for reflection in collective worship. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is often enhanced by collective worship. Children appreciate the opportunity to celebrate collective worship in Sherborne Abbey twice a year. The headteacher would like children to visit the Abbey for worship more often but this is not possible because of the travelling distance involved. Children's understanding of Anglican faith and practice is enhanced by a variety of visitors, mainly staff from Sherborne Abbey, who come to lead collective worship in school. Children enjoy the range of visitors that are invited to lead worship. Collective worship is formally monitored once a year by a governor. Evaluation of collective worship by the headteacher, both formally and informally, has led to a number of changes for example inviting parents to class led acts of worship, increasing the number of visual stimuli used in worship and increasing the involvement and participation of the children.

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

The school has a distinctive Christian vision and the headteacher and governors successfully promote Christian values throughout the school. The school is proud of its Christian character. The headteacher recognises the need to develop further measures to monitor and challenge the school as a church school. The governors are knowledgeable and supportive of the school. Staff feel confident and comfortable about their role in sharing and promoting the school's vision. The views of stakeholders are sought about many areas of the life of the school, however the school would like to develop further their school improvement strategies to include the evaluation of the school as a church school. The school enjoys excellent links with the clergy at Sherborne Abbey. The leadership of the school is committed to developing children's sense of community responsibility through participation in local and national events and, as a result, children have a strong sense of making a positive contribution to society as outlined in the 'Every Child Matters' agenda. Thus children participate in local activities such as 'Sherborne in Bloom', the Lions' Swimathon and many musical events as well as in national fund raising activities such as 'Children in Need'. These activities also help to develop children's empathy for others. Children's awareness of global issues was enhanced by participating in a local link with troops in Afghanistan which involved them in sending Christmas cards together with the community sending gifts. These were much appreciated by the recipients in Afghanistan. The children's social and cultural development is enhanced by exchanging letters and fund raising for their partner school in Ghana.