

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Sidbury Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Street
Sidbury
Sidmouth
EX10 0SB

Diocese: Exeter

Local authority: Devon
Dates of inspection: 10 December 2008
Date of last inspection: 26-27 April 2005
School's unique reference number: 113363
Headteacher: Mrs Diane Gordon
Inspector's name and number: Mrs Tricia Martin NS105

School context

Sidbury Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is smaller than average with 99 learners on roll. The school serves the village of Sidbury and also takes learners from the surrounding area. The school community is of mainly white British ethnicity with a small number of children from minority ethnic backgrounds. Twenty seven percent of children have Special Educational Needs.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Sidbury Voluntary Controlled Primary School as a Church of England school are satisfactory

The geographical position of the school and its links with the local parish ensure that Sidbury Voluntary Controlled School is recognised as a Church of England school. Its effectiveness, as a Church school, is limited because of lack of clarity of the Christian vision for the school.

Established strengths

- The care of all members of the school community
- The stimulating learning environment
- The wide range of learning experiences and extra curricular activities
- The commitment of all staff

Focus for development

- Review the school's aims to clarify and make explicit the Christian values promoted by the school
- Devise strategies to effectively share the Christian vision of the school with all stakeholders
- Review and update the collective worship policy in the light of good practice, devise strategies to implement, monitor and evaluate worship and, train worship leaders
- Utilize the school environment to enhance and develop learners' spirituality

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

Learners are polite, thoughtful and caring as a result of the care they receive from all staff. Learners are confident because relationships between learners, staff and learners, and staff are respectful and supportive. Learners speak of the wide variety of extra curricular clubs run

by the school which broaden their experiences and increase their enjoyment. The school has a good Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) policy in place which allows learners to explore issues and develop as individuals. However its impact is satisfactory as no links are made between this programme and Christian values. All learning is clearly linked to the Every Child Matters Agenda but this does not embrace spiritual development. The recent policy on spiritual development is not linked to Christian values. The school is developing its outside environment but misses opportunities to link this to the Christian belief that God created the world. Although the school has worked hard to create explicit Christian symbols around the grounds, it has not fully understood that it is not the symbol which is of prime importance. It is the way the school articulates and lives out its' Christian faith that matters and there was no consensus among the school community as to what this means in practice. The school cares deeply for its' learners but there is little evidence to suggest that this is because of its' Christian character.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Learners understand that they have a weekly act of worship in church because they are a Church school. As a result of these visits, learners have a satisfactory understanding of Anglican practice and the cycle of the Church's year. Half of the learners expressed the view that worship has an impact on how they lead their lives. One learner talked of worship as an opportunity to get into contact with God but this came from the learner's personal faith perspective and was not representative of the group of children interviewed. Learners enjoy worship most when they are involved in leading it as they and the other learners are more engaged. At present opportunities for this are limited. Consequently learners talk of acts of worship as being "boring" and "tedious". The worship planning is insufficiently detailed to indicate the breadth of worship experiences. No conclusions can be drawn about the quality of worship experiences as the school has no records. This makes a judgement on the impact of worship on the learners' spiritual development insecure. Staff have not received any training in leading Acts of Worship. However, worship has the capacity to improve under the direction of the relatively new co-ordinator who is committed to developing the programme.

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

Staff and governors work well together but have lost focus on the Christian character of the school. But the school does care about its ethos. This is evident through discussion with all stakeholders. The school cares about its learners and aims to give learners high quality learning experiences. However, because the school's **Christian** vision is not clearly articulated, it is not understood, therefore it is not shared and its impact is reduced. The school aims are not linked to specific Christian values. Lack of any appearance of Church School issues (Christian ethos, Collective Worship, Religious Education) in the School Development Plan (SDP) suggests that it is a low priority. Staff refute this but cannot provide evidence to substantiate their opinions. Governors are not fully aware of the last Section 23 (Church School Inspection) report and the areas identified for development. Policies do not reflect a Christian ethos or Christian values. However, relationships between the Church and school have improved. One foundation governor in particular challenges the school about its Christian ethos. Church school self evaluation lacks rigour and the involvement of all stakeholders. However, the school has taken care to ensure that good Collective Worship and Religious Education co-ordinators have been appointed which gives them the capacity to improve providing they receive the backing of senior management and governors both in financial and practical terms.