

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Silchester Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School,

School Lane,

Reading

RG7 2NJ

Diocese: Winchester

LA: Hampshire

Dates of inspection: 14th November 2006

Date of last inspection: June 2000

School's Unique Reference Number: 116369

Name of Headteacher: Mrs S Elliott

Inspector's name with National Society inspector's number: Alan Brown No. 256

School Context

Silchester Church of England School is a voluntary aided primary school with 190 pupils on roll aged between 4 to 11 years. Pupils come from a wide area including Silchester itself. There have been some significant staff changes in the last two years including the appointment of the Headteacher and the Deputy Headteacher with the new RE coordinator in place since September.

Previous Inspection: Progress since the last inspection

The School has progressed since the last inspection and has addressed the issues raised at the time. The change in staffing and the new allocation of responsibilities has enabled the school to clarify its future vision and strategy.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Silchester as a Church of England school are good

Silchester Primary School is a good Church of England school. The school is very welcoming and the Christian foundation of the School is clearly identifiable. The staff, together with the Governing Body, provide a stimulating and secure school where learners and staff can grow and develop in a friendly, happy and creative environment. All the pupils, parents and staff interviewed commented on the warmth of relationships in the school, the varied activities on offer to pupils and the enthusiasm of the teachers.

Focus for development

- To revise the RE policy, update resources and to monitor the quality of marking of pupils' work in RE;
- To continue support the new RE coordinator.

The manner in which the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meets the needs of all learners is good.

The School's character is distinctively Christian. Collective worship has a central place in the life of the school with every effort made to meet the spiritual, moral and emotional needs of all its pupils. This is one of the outstanding features of the school and contributes significantly to its Christian character. Another is the quality of relationships between pupils and staff and the staff themselves. The pupils and parents, invited through a questionnaire to comment on the 'Christian character' of the school, responded very favourably indeed. In their different ways they all spoke very highly of the school, of its welcoming atmosphere and the friends the pupils make and retain. Pupils like and trust their teachers and the way in which they are taught. Some referred to the teaching as 'exciting'. The questionnaire completed by the pupils provided a ringing affirmation of the teachers and the school. Teachers have strong pastoral concerns for their pupils, as all teachers should, but that care, in

this School, is rooted in the Christian values of the staff and Governing Body. Relationships with the church are very good and the Incumbent is a welcome visitor to the school much appreciated by the pupils and staff. He has also worked hard to enhance the Christian character of the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The opportunities for collective worship at Silchester school are outstanding. Worship offers, throughout the pupils' time in school, an insight into formal and informal forms of worship. The two acts of worship seen on the theme of 'Remembering' were of the highest quality and wholly appropriate to the age of the pupils. The KS2 pupils sang well and there was a lively interaction in both acts of worship. They were thoughtful and thought-provoking occasions with all the pupils fully engaged. Worship in the school provides an educational environment while still retaining the qualities of worship. Some of the special services organised in the school, like the Fellowship Meal, allow pupils to learn about and share in the Anglican traditions of worship. The school should ensure that pupils are familiar with a range of Christian prayers. No pupils are withdrawn from collective worship.

The Religious Education is good

Religious Education is generally well resourced though the Library requires some additional modern resources for pupils and staff. The Religious Education coordinator has been in place for two months and has a clear plan of action to raise the quality of teaching and learning in RE. The policy now needs to be up-dated but there is a very good development plan now in place and the school has ensured there is appropriate professional support for the RE coordinator. Standards are good with pupils producing work of good quality but their work needs to be monitored more effectively with greater attention given to identifying strengths and weaknesses if this is to be consolidated and developed further. The Year One lesson on 'Journeys' introduced the concept of journeying to the class and, like the Year Five lesson on 'Prophecy' was taught with excellent timing, verve and enthusiasm which caught the pupils' interest. Pupils like RE and work willingly and effectively, responding readily to a variety of tasks with enthusiasm and enjoyment. Relationships in the classrooms are excellent. The school will need support for Religious Education to ensure the current good progress is maintained.

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

The Headteacher and the leadership team are lively, thoughtful, and morale boosting: they are also relaxed and encouraging, creating a unified and mutually supportive staff. They all share a clear vision of a church school fully committed to the academic education of the pupils and to the belief that the spiritual and personal development of each pupil is important. Pupils can approach staff knowing their concerns will be listened to with professional and personal sympathy. Parents, and grand parents, testified that Silchester School is a well-managed environment with clear and distinctive Christian values. The school is generating a momentum of energy and enthusiasm for educational and spiritual progress that will soon bear greater fruition. Christian values, faith and service, together with a clear educational vision and drive, lie at the heart of the school.

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