

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Somerfords' Walter Powell Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Dauntsey Road
Great Somerford
Chippenham
Wiltshire
SN15 5HS

Diocese: Bristol

LA: Wiltshire

Date of Inspection: 14th December 2005

Date of last Inspection: 29th November – 3rd December 1999

School's unique reference no: 126442

Name of Headteacher: Mrs Terry Hall

Inspector's name & NS no: Mrs Jo Curd 181

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Somerfords' Walter Powell as a Church of England school are good

Somerfords' Walter Powell school is distinctive and effective as a Church of England school. Staff and Governors are very committed to improving the school and ensuring good behaviour and personal development. Leadership and management are good. Pupils recognise how important worship and prayer are in their church school and provision for this is good. Religious Education is in a state of change, it is currently satisfactory.

Context of the school.

Somerfords' Walter Powell CE school is a much smaller than average primary school in rural Wiltshire. There are currently 48 pupils aged between 4 and 11 on roll. The reception class is taught separately in the mornings and join the Year 1 and 2 class in the afternoon. Years 3, 4, 5, and 6 are taught as one class. All the pupils are from white British backgrounds. A small proportion of pupils are travellers. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is on par with the national average but there have been a high proportion with profound physical disabilities over recent years. Pupils are from a wide range of social backgrounds.

Established strengths

- Leadership and management are good. The school provides a stable and positive environment for pupils to learn.
- Pupils behave very well, are looked after well and make good progress in their personal and social development in this small church school.

Focus for development

- To improve religious education by implementing, assessing and monitoring the new scheme of work.
- To meet the head teachers and governors expressed interest in training to improve the effectiveness of their specific roles in this church school.

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

Broad Christian values underlie all that is done in the school. It is very inclusive and all the pupils flourish, feel valued and special. All pupils including those with other faiths or none are valued, respected and included. Spiritual, moral, social and

cultural development are good. Pupils are happy, well behaved, confident and considerate. They are safe and well looked after. They recognise that there is very little misbehaviour in the school at all. Pupils enjoy school and few could name anything they disliked. Most make satisfactory progress in their academic learning and reach standards on par with national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress due to effective teaching in small groups. These pupils are well cared for and well integrated, for example, taking major parts in the school play. A small number of pupils with emotional and behavioural needs are supported and channelled well. Pupils speak very highly of all the staff especially the Head Teacher. They know that they have time to listen to them and help them and are confident that staff will always be able to sort things out. One boy related how he had done something wrong, was encouraged to reflect upon this, how he was then sorry and owned up, after which he was able to move on and learn from his mistake. Over the past few years the school has been through a difficult time resulting in several staff changes and some discontent. On the whole relationships are now warm and supportive. The school building is attractive, organised effectively and is well looked after. This promotes positive attitudes, care and respect and provides an uplifting environment.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Pupils know that acts of Collective Worship and prayer are central to life at their church school. So many pupils are eager to lead grace before lunch that a rota has been introduced to ensure that everybody has a turn. Each day starts with a Collective Act of Worship for which the whole school gathers in the hall. This successfully sets the ethos and expectations for life throughout the school. A Bible and candle at the front of the hall act as a focus for the Christian worship. Pupils and staff take active roles in the worship. Pupils behave extremely well, listen carefully and eagerly join in when invited to do so. Links with the church are very good and contribute significantly to pupil's spiritual development. The Rector leads an Act of Collective Worship at the school each week. This is his main link with children as few attend church. Although his slower and more traditional style contrasts with other approaches in the school, pupils speak very warmly about these times and welcome him as an important part of their school. Acts of Collective Worship are held in the church at Christmas, Easter and Harvest. Pupils eagerly take part in these by leading readings, performing drama and praying.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

It is currently in a state of flux. The previous Religious Education coordinator wrote part of a new scheme of work. She left at the end of last summer term and the Head Teacher is now leading the subject. A new local scheme of work is imminent and the school and Governors have wisely accepted advice to use the local syllabus as guidance until this is introduced. Standards are broadly on par with national expectations. The subject contributes well to pupil's spiritual and moral development. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons and discussions with pupils show that they all enjoy the subject. Older pupils particularly enjoy lessons with the Head Teacher when she links Religious Education with drama and art. One pupil described these as 'such fun'. There is some good differentiation in lessons, for example in the Key Stage One class when some pupils used puppets to retell the nativity story, some sequenced pictures and script and some rewrote the story in their own words. However, there has not been any monitoring of lessons or work recently. Pupils work in books shows that there is currently some lack of continuity and progression, some marking does not help pupils progress and some work remains incomplete.

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

The school has recently been through a time of upheaval and change. Reaching its current stable and largely positive position has taken considerable commitment, time and energy. The Head Teacher and Governors show Christian attitudes in their commitment to the school and their endeavours to raise standards and attitudes. They have worked extremely diligently, putting in a lot of extra time, including weekends and holidays, to establish stability in this small school. This has largely been effective. All the staff including lunch time assistants and the cleaner are valued and overall there is a good team spirit throughout the school. Governors are extremely supportive. They are each linked with a curriculum area and have started to monitor and review these. Unfortunately the Governor linked with Religious Education has not been able to see any work or lessons yet. Staff and Governors are committed to implementing the new local scheme of work for the subject as soon as possible. Parents recognise improvements in behaviour and most see other changes in the school as positive. Policies for Religious Education and Acts of Collective Worship generally endorse the school's Church foundation but do little to expand this. Governors and staff recognise the need to develop their specific roles within this church school, they would welcome training on this.

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