

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Southrop Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Southrop,
Letchlade,
Glos.
GL7 3NU

Diocese of Gloucester

Gloucestershire LA

Date of inspection 27th February 2008

Date of last inspection 1st and 9th January 2004

School's URN 115651

Name of Headteacher Mrs Kate Holmes

Inspector Miss C Hammant, NS009

Context

Southrop is a small two class Cotswold village primary school that serves Southrop, Eastleach and Fyfield villages. Parents in Lechlade, Fairford and other local areas also choose to send their children to the school. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage and none of them speaks English as a second language. There are no pupils who have a statement of special educational needs and the proportion identified as having learning difficulties is below average. The head teacher has chosen to take phased retirement as part of a governors' succession plan.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Southrop School as a Church of England School are good.

Christian values permeate both worship and the relationships between all members of the school community. Learners confidently express their opinions and share their feelings in a caring and supportive learning environment.

Established strengths

- A strong Christian ethos which permeates the life of the school.
- Strong and effective links with the local Anglican church.
- Caring, considerate and confident learners.
- Worship which plays an important and influential part in daily life in school.
- Committed teachers who effectively plan for and incorporate spiritual development across the whole curriculum.

Focus for development

- To make more explicit the Christian ethos of the school in public documentation.
- To enable children to contribute to the evaluation of collective worship and influence its future planning.
- To create a space indoors for prayer and quiet reflection.

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

Most learners at Southrop feel valued, respected and special. They see their school as a secure and friendly place where each individual is well-known. Pupils expressed confidence that there is always someone to help them whether they are hurt 'inside' or 'outside'. They know that difficulties are addressed fairly and promptly. There is a sense of pride in the school and one member suggested that its Christian ethos is expressed by 'the nature of the people who come out of it'.

Pupils enjoy their work and see the worth of what they learn. They acknowledge the influence that teaching in Religious Education has on their lives. Christian values clearly impact on pupils' personal and spiritual development and influence their attitude to learning. Good progress is made in learning and achievement, and this is celebrated regularly when the whole school is gathered together. Learners have a clear understanding of right and wrong, and show compassion for others in need through charity events. One child raised the question of the difference in salary between a footballer and a paramedic, pointing out the vital role of the paramedic in caring for others. This awareness and understanding of important issues was also evident in an RE lesson that was observed during the inspection. Learners have good levels of self-esteem and independence. They show interest in and respect for other religions.

Spiritual development is actively encouraged through well planned, focussed opportunities within the wider curriculum. One learner explained that the parish priest encourages him to think more deeply about life, and that listening to music sometimes provides opportunities to reflect on thoughts and feelings.

The majority of pupils and all the staff feel their views are taken seriously. Members of the school community provide mutual support for one another. There is good evidence of collaborative and co-operative working across the school and staff speak of their Christian beliefs impacting on their professional lives. Learners speak with confidence of the lack of bullying in the school and the ways in which older children willingly support younger ones. The Christian character of the school enables pupils to develop socially, morally and culturally as well as spiritually. The essential Christian characteristics of a Church School are not strongly emphasised in the School Prospectus or on the website. Similarly, the school logo has no Christian symbol incorporated into it.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.

Worship is central to the life of the school and underpins its Christian character. Pupils, including the very youngest children, make positive steps forward in their spiritual development as a result of sharing in collective worship, and in planning and presenting acts of worship in class groups. Evidence of this was seen during the inspection in an act of worship on the theme of 'Myself' where the question was asked 'What makes your heart fly?' Learners appreciate the importance and significance of worship in the life of the school. Acts of worship are well planned and recorded, with a new Christian value being introduced each month. Staff and governors evaluate worship but pupils are not involved in this process. Classrooms are used as worship spaces and they are effectively organised to create a welcoming and reverent atmosphere. A candle is lit as a focus.

Staff attend worship regularly, joining in the singing and the prayers. Spiritual insight gained from worship is reflected in children's work. An example of this is the following prayer written by one of the children: 'Forgive my words of wrong, forgive my cold hearted ways. Help me to love and care, help me to give and share'. The school is situated near the parish church and parents attend the monthly school services held there, speaking warmly of this opportunity to share with their children. Parents also appreciate the pastoral care the school provides which they see as one expression of its Christian ethos. Teachers make every effort to match collective worship to the age, ability and needs of the children. The whole school knows and understands the Lord's Prayer and takes part in the Anglican responses used in the services held in church. Children also write their own

prayers which are used in school worship.

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

The majority of stakeholders speak with confidence of the school's Christian vision. The head teacher, supported by the foundation governors and class teachers, effectively communicates the Christian vision of the school in her daily interactions with pupils and parents. There is, however, insufficient reference to the school's Christian foundation in its public documentation. Good pastoral and spiritual links exist between the school and the church, the parish priest being a regular visitor to the school. Foundation governors take a very active part in the life of the school, ensuring the PCC is kept informed of progress and events. The parish priest and head teacher have evaluated the school as a church school and are aware of areas for further development. No other governors have contributed to this process to date. School development plans include reference to worship and RE. The introduction of the revised Agreed Syllabus has focussed planning and assessment in RE to enable standards to rise. Standards in RE are similar to those in other core subjects in the curriculum. The last inspection required greater input and focus on spiritual development across the curriculum and this has been achieved very effectively. The RE coordinator has attended training for the revised Agreed Syllabus, and the KS2 teacher has been closely involved in evaluating the school's vision as part of an NPQH course. All staff were informed of the Christian character of the school on their appointment and induction. Parents speak with confidence about the way their views are considered when questionnaires are sent home. There is an active and supportive Parents' Association which raises funds to support school initiatives. Unfortunately there are no other Christian denominations in the village or in neighbouring villages who could become involved in the life and worship of the school. However, it is hoped that the introduction of 'Open the Book' in the near future will involve more members of the local Christian community in the worship life of the school.

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