

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Sparkwell All Saints Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Sparkwell  
Plymouth  
Devon  
PL7 5DT

#### **Diocese: Exeter**

Local authority: Devon  
Dates of inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> January 2007  
Date of last inspection: Not known  
School's unique reference number: 113415  
Headteacher: (Acting) Sue Murdin  
Inspector's name and number: Sue Walker 391

#### **School context**

Sparkwell All Saints school is a small rural school of thirty pupils, none of whom come from minority ethnic groups. A high proportion of learners have special educational needs and there is a high turnover of pupils. The school changed its status from Voluntary Controlled to Voluntary Aided in May 2006. An Acting Headteacher has been in post since September 2006.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Sparkwell All Saints V.A. Primary School as a Church of England school are good.**

The Acting Headteacher is well supported by Governors and by the clergy in sustaining an ethos that has Christian values at its heart. The effect of these values is evident in the way learners behave towards each other. This behaviour is based upon love and forgiveness towards others. The positive relationships in the school are appreciated by learners and by their parents. There are strong links with the Church and with the village community.

#### **Established strengths**

- Strong Christian Values are practiced in the day to day life of the school
- There are strong and mutually supportive links between the school and the Church
- Religious Education and Worship support and sustain the Christian Character of the school well.

#### **Focus for development**

- Develop a monitoring programme so that the effectiveness of the work of the school can be evaluated by Governors and staff and priorities for school improvement can be established.
- Introduce a rolling programme for acts of collective worship and a programme for evaluating the impact of this area on the lives of the learners.
- Review the aims of the school and develop a mission statement to make known the school's distinctively Christian Character.

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

The school, through its Christian character makes good provision to meet the needs of all its learners, especially those with special needs. Learners feel valued as individuals and talk enthusiastically about the care given to them by adults in the school. They have a good understanding of Christian values and know, as one girl put it that "Our school is part of the Church". There are many opportunities provided for learners to take responsibility for the care of others for example through fund raising activities. Younger children appreciate the

way in which older children who are “Blue Caps” can be trusted to help them if needed. This trust in the way that the school supports learners is shared by their parents who speak of the openness of adults and praise the ways in which teachers help their children to grow in confidence. Very good use is made of the church building for worship and for learning and there is strong support from the clergy and the P.C.C. The school environment supports Christian spiritual development through encouraging an appreciation of God’s wonderful world.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Collective worship is an important part of the school day. Learners’ attitudes to worship are very positive and they talk spontaneously about their enjoyment of all acts of collective worship, especially the weekly one led by the Vicar. They listen well and respond confidently to questions. Worship themes are accessible to all ages and learners show a good understanding of the meaning of the words of the songs. They know the Lord’s Prayer and show great respect when praying. However, whilst prayer is an integral part of all acts of collective worship there are no regular opportunities provided for prayer during other parts of the school day to help learners develop the use of prayer in everyday life. Learners give clear explanations of how the Bible stories that they hear help them to live their lives as Jesus would like. Although the school has recently adopted a plan for worship, there is no rolling programme to cover a variety of themes over a long period of time and no formal means of monitoring and evaluating their impact.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good with some outstanding.**

Religious education has a good effect on the development of learners’ understanding of Christianity and of other world religions. Their recording of what they have learnt shows that achievement in R.E. is similar to that in other core subjects. However, when learners talk about what they have learnt in lessons, and through the quality of their answers to teachers’ questions, they demonstrate above average levels of knowledge. This is because of good teaching which has some outstanding features such as very good subject knowledge and skilful questioning to assess what has been learnt in the lesson. The use of “What I Have Learnt” cards gives good opportunities for learners to assess their own progress. This good teaching has a positive effect on sustaining the distinctive Christian character of the school. However, there is as yet no whole school method of recording learners’ progress as they move through the levels described in the syllabus and no systematic way of using teachers’ ongoing assessments to assist in planning future lessons. Whilst learners’ knowledge of Christianity is good there are few opportunities provided for them to learn about the variety of practise in the Anglican Church or in other Christian Denominations. Frequent visits to the local Church are well used by the school and learners have a good knowledge of the names and uses of each part of the Church. The Acting Headteacher, who is the subject co-ordinator, has recognised the need to increase visits to other Christian Churches and to the places of worship used by other faiths in order to widen learners’ experiences.

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

The Acting Headteacher is well supported by staff and Governors in creating and maintaining the distinctive Christian character of the school. Governors place great importance on the school’s Christian foundation and purpose. To this end, Christian life and values are expressed in the lives of its staff and learners. School leaders have a clear vision of how to sustain the Christian Character of the school and this is underpinned by good provision of R.E. and Collective Worship. The aim of further involving parents in the life of the school is supported by the introduction of ‘Welcome Worship’ for parents and the reinstatement of the Friends of the School. However, whilst the Acting Headteacher and Governors are committed to celebrating and making known the nature of the school, the published aims do not do justice to this commitment and there is no mission statement to make known the strong Christian base on which all that happens in the school is built. The Acting

Headteacher and Governors have recognised the need to review the School Prospectus so that it can more clearly describe the school's Christian values. Governors pay regular visits to school but have not yet been involved with school staff in evaluating the impact and effectiveness of its work as a recently created Voluntary Aided School.

SIAS report 11<sup>th</sup> January 2007. Sparkwell All Saints Voluntary Aided Primary School, Sparkwell, Plymouth PL7 5DB