

# National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

## **Standlake Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Standlake

Witney

OX29 7SQ

### **Diocese of Oxford**

Local Authority: Oxfordshire

Dates of inspection: 26 February 2008

Date of last inspection: March 2004

School's Unique reference number: 123111

Name of Headteacher: Mrs Sandra Connell

Inspector's name and NS inspector's number: Mari Powell 143

### **School Context**

Standlake is a small primary school, well embedded into its community but also very receptive to a small proportion of its population which is more mobile. The recently transformed building provides good accommodation for learning and planning has begun to redesign the grounds as a resource for learning.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Standlake Primary school as a Church of England school are good.**

Standlake is a good school with some outstanding features. The headteacher, staff and governors are dedicated to promoting Christian principles which encourage all children to reach their potential.

### **Established strengths**

- The energy and vision of the headteacher, well supported by staff and governors to create an ethos that fully reflects Christian principles.
- The approach to inclusion and promotion of the children's self esteem.
- The good quality content of acts of worship which promotes an increasing awareness of the spiritual dimension of life.

### **Focus for development**

- Provide areas for quiet reflection inside the school and include opportunities in the plan for developing the outdoor environment.
- Support the hard working and dedicated governors to further develop their role as critical friends in order to enable the school to fully reach its potential to become an outstanding church school.
- Make clear, in the planning for and recording of worship, how effective and stimulating resources and activities support the well chosen content.

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

The life and ethos of the school are based on the value of a child's being in the sight of God. The harmony and excellent behaviour in the school arise from good relationships and a dedication to promoting the children's self-awareness. From this grows their increasingly developing ability to relate to and respect others. This factor is an important feature of the harmony of the playground and the children's courtesy in listening to the views of others. Equally, the children's voices are heard by and respected by the staff team. "In the words of one child, we are polite and helpful to one another and we respect one another." Good quality learning in religious education as well as opportunities to respond to issues during school worship provide the children with a very sound range of biblical vocabulary. They are increasingly able to apply this and relate aspects of stories from the Bible to their daily life. For example, as they compare pictures of a man in a very sad,

downtrodden state and later when his circumstances had improved, their ability to empathise with his situation was vividly reflected in their observations. The indoor environment is attractive. Work in art and musical opportunities are positive features of pupils' spiritual development. Pupils readily agreed with the inspector that a further positive development might be the provision of attractive, quiet areas for reflection inside and outside the school, together with greater focus and variety in dressing the worship table. The views of pupils are sought on many school initiatives. They indicated that they are already thinking about how to develop focus small areas indoors and also in the development of the grounds.

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

The quality of school worship is good. In fact, the act of worship seen had outstanding features. The theme, based upon "judgement" was very well illustrated by captivating visual material and good opportunities for pupils' responses. The quality of music was also a very positive feature of the occasion. Pupils say they look forward to acts of worship and enjoy them, above all when they are able to participate actively. The hall features attractive displays, especially of pupils' art work based on Mexican crosses and some large figures reflecting a variety of human types. Features of Anglican liturgy are regularly incorporated and the local church is regularly in use for school services. These occasions and others in school are well attended by parents and members of the local community. The link between the school and the local Rector is very beneficial in terms of worship, the teaching of religious education and of pastoral support for the school. The staff, together with the Rector are very committed to encouraging questioning by the children as well as developing their ability to pray. The children are growing in confidence in expressing their views about worship and its impact upon them. Worship is clearly an important feature of the school day and enhances spiritual and moral development. Themes for worship are well planned to include Christian, as well as, when appropriate, elements from other major faiths. However, the recording of acts of worship does not include reference to those valuable resources and supporting activities capable of forming an invaluable source of reference for future planning of worship.

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

The school is led by a dedicated, hard working headteacher whose mission is to promote the all round development of the children. She has won the wholehearted support of staff for whom she provides a very successful role model. The headteacher, committed as she is to raising the self-esteem of the children, also ensures that development opportunities are provided for the staff. They are united in their determination to develop and communicate their vision in keeping with the school's Anglican foundation. School is a very welcoming place, readily seen when new children arrive and visitors join in activities. Parents, who were spoken to, were loud in their praise of the school's care for their children and openness in communication with them. Several voiced their appreciation of the curriculum which provides good opportunities for spiritual and moral development. They also welcome the inclusion of opportunities for children to learn about faiths and cultures. The school is successfully developing an evaluative approach to its activities. Governors are pro-active and supportive. They readily embrace the fact that in order to move the school further, as a church school, the time is ripe to develop further their role as critical friends. This will ensure that the strategic view of the school's growth as a church school continues to develop and is promoted by everyone involved.