

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Lane
Cromhall
South Glos.
GL12 8AL

Diocese of Gloucester

South Gloucestershire L A

Date of inspection: 28th April 2008
Date of last inspection: 3rd & 10th February 2005
School's URN: 109181
Name of Headteacher: Mrs Esther Saunders
Inspector: Chris Hammant NS009

Context

St Andrew's Church of England Primary School is a very small village school consisting of two classes, Key Stage One and Key Stage Two. It has fewer than average pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most of these difficulties are dyslexia. Almost all pupils are White British and all speak English as their first language. Changes in the local population due to the pressures of economic restraints have meant that there has been a fall in pupil numbers since the last inspection.

Summary Judgement

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Andrew's as a Church of England School are good.

A caring Christian atmosphere permeates the life and work of the school which is located close to the parish church in an attractive rural setting.

Established strengths

- A strong Christian ethos and character.
- A committed Christian head teacher and staff.
- Strong, secure links with the parish church.
- The centrality and importance of worship in daily life in school.
- Effective RE teaching which contributes to pupils' spiritual development and supports the distinctive Christian character of the school.

Focus for development

- Governors should provide written as well as oral feedback after visits to monitor collective worship.
- Identify collective worship as a discrete item in the School Development Plan.
- Review and update current practice in planning and evaluation of worship.
- Identify specific governor training needs and implement training required.

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

Virtually all learners feel valued and special. They are very happy learning in their school and take a pride in their work. Teachers build trusting and respectful relationships with pupils, supporting them individually in their learning and enabling them to fulfil their potential. Learners find their work meaningful and enjoyable and speak confidently of their achievements and the benefits of learning in a small school. Particular enthusiasm was expressed for religious education lessons where work is seen as fun and easy to understand. This effective teaching challenges learners to think on a spiritual level appropriate to their age group and enables them to learn extensively from their religious education experiences. The Christian character of the school is reflected clearly in RE teaching as it is seen as the core subject, helping to underpin the ethos of the school. Learners aspire to be helpful, kind and thoughtful people as they grow up into adulthood. The Christian values, taught by the school and the parish priest, are evident in the children's relationships with each other and their teachers. The positive and enabling atmosphere which this creates impacts on progress in work and in maturity of attitude in most pupils.

Learners demonstrate a respect and understanding of other faiths. They appreciate the need to forgive others and understand the importance of Christian values and school rules. The Christian ethos of the school contributes to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of virtually all learners. Staff actively seek opportunities to incorporate activities which support spiritual development into all their lessons. These activities are recorded on an audit sheet which demonstrates the rich variety of experiences offered to the children. Learners' views are taken seriously and, through the work of the School Council, initiatives are considered and implemented. Staff members also feel their views are valued and contribute to the collaborative decision making in the school. They talk openly about their own personal faith and the important part it plays in their work. Any differences of opinion are talked through with respect and care. The school makes the very best use of display space and the school prayer, RE work and worship theme are a prominent feature in this. Displays are colourful and attractively present children's work of the highest quality. A beautiful mosaic school sign made by the pupils welcomes visitors to the school. Outdoors there is a specifically designed quiet area where children can sit and reflect. The school hall provides a space indoors where children can pray and think during worship. A book of children's prayers is available for everyone to see and use. An example of one prayer, written by a Key Stage One pupil, is 'Dear God, Thank you for letting Jesus die for us. Thank you for your love for us. I will try to be a good girl for you. Amen'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is central to the life of the school and sets the tone for each day. It underpins the Christian character of the school and takes place both in the school and in the church. The parish priest is a familiar and very welcome member of the school community. Her contribution to the life and worship of the school supports totally the Christian ethos of the school and helps to enhance the spiritual dimension in worship and relationships. The school is regarded as part of the church and regularly mentioned in church prayers. Learners share in interesting and stimulating acts of worship which provide opportunities to be calm and quiet as well as sing with energy and enthusiasm. Children eagerly participate in worship and behave well both in school and in the church. Learners engage in questions and answers and learn to understand and respect others' beliefs. Quiet music provides a background for reflection and prayer. Together these elements create an atmosphere of spiritual depth where the presence of God is acknowledged and celebrated, and where opportunities for spiritual growth are provided in abundance. Learners contribute readings and prayers of their choice at services where Christian Festivals are celebrated. Learners know and understand the Christian values which are the focus of worship each month. The school uses the 'Values for Life' and other resources to plan worship and is preparing to take on board the SEAL materials to support this. A complete review of the planning of worship will enable this to be implemented successfully. Currently governors share in worship when they visit the school and report back verbally to the Governing Body. This reporting has yet to be formalised into a written report which will

better inform planning. Informal evaluations from staff and pupils also contribute to the effectiveness of worship. Collective worship does not appear as a discrete item in the School Development Plan but is incorporated with RE. As it is regarded as such a key part of school life this warrants review. Acts of worship are well matched to the ages and abilities of the children and the older children set a positive example of appropriate participation and behaviour to the younger children. The children are very knowledgeable about the Christian festivals celebrated each year and share in the Eucharist at Candlemas and Ash Wednesday in church. They know the Lord's Prayer and have been taught about its meaning and significance. They can recite the school prayer which is said at the end of each day. They respond appropriately to the Christian greeting of 'The Lord be with you'. Worship is distinctly Christian and supports the school's Anglican heritage. Visitors from other denominations are also welcomed into the school and enrich the worship life of the community.

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

The leadership and management share a strong Christian vision for the school. This is effectively shared with all staff and evident in their relationships and commitment, and that of the foundation governors; but it is not always clearly and consistently expressed in all relevant documentation. A system for review of documents and policies operates in the school and through this system this matter is able to be addressed. Parents are very aware of the Christian vision and ethos of the school which is important to the majority of them. Strong links exist between the school, the church and the village. Foundation governors promote these links and take an active part in the life of the school. The school has engaged in self-evaluation and the process has involved governors to some extent. The head teacher is aware of the areas where some improvement is needed. Standards in RE teaching and collective worship are good due to the active involvement of the head teacher and her staff in evaluating progress and raising standards. Levels of achievement in RE are equivalent to or better than those for literacy and numeracy. The head teacher shares training opportunities with the staff to enable the school to develop further as a church school. Governors are planning to further their training in this area, but have not yet identified their training needs. Staff members have been made fully aware of the Christian character of the school when applying for posts and in the period of their induction. Parents are happy about the ways in which the school seeks their views on issues. A large majority of parents support the school in its role as a worshipping community by attending special school Christian festival services at the parish church. There is also a meaningful involvement of other denominations in the school in worship and in out-of-school activities.