

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Issey Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Gardeners Way
St Issey
Wadebridge
PL27 7RN

Diocese: Truro

Local authority: Cornwall
Date of inspection: 17th July 2009
Date of last inspection: 3rd and 5th July 2006
School's unique reference number: 112017
Headteacher: Barbara Hough
Inspector's name and number: Angela Sumner 580

School context

St Issey Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary school is a 3 mixed age class village school. It serves a wide rural community. There are 56 learners and 25% have Special Educational Needs. Learners are mainly of White British origin with 3 learners having English as an Additional Language. Relocation to a new school in September 2007 has raised significant issues which have continued to need effective management.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Issey Voluntary Aided Primary School as a Church of England school are good

This school is held in high regard by all stakeholders. The distinctive Christian ethos is evident throughout and makes a good contribution to teaching and learning. Learners receive good care and support and are encouraged to fulfil their potential within an inclusive environment based on explicit Christian values.

Established strengths

- Welcoming, supportive nurturing environment based on explicit Christian values
- Good links between school, church and wider community
- Caring approach to all stakeholders
- High quality Collective Worship incorporating a wide range of Worship styles.

Focus for development

- Foundation governors and Headteacher to secure a formal structure for monitoring and evaluation as a church school to include all stakeholders
- Develop formal Assessment of RE to include an evidence base

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

Learners feel safe, valued and happy because of the good level of care shown by learners to each other, and by staff to learners. Learners speak about the caring family atmosphere and express pride in their school. Learners show positive self esteem and enthusiastically speak of school and church. This is because learners develop their potential within a nurturing and inclusive environment showing good links between church and school. The aims and ethos of the school are based on explicit Christian values, such as respect, honesty and compassion, and are at the centre of the school's educational aims expressed within the ethos statement. Christian values are shared and discussed so that learners know how these values can help them in their daily lives. Christian values are evident throughout the school in practice and articulated by members of the school community. The school's documentation and displays proclaim the school's Christian character. Learners confidently describe Christian symbols displayed around the school and explain their meaning with clarity. Learners explained the meaning of artwork about caring for God's world as "keeping the world beautiful that God has created". Learners speak positively of quiet areas for personal reflection in the school grounds. Consequently the whole school environment stimulates spiritual development. The

school have identified further development of the school environment to provide further opportunities for spiritual development and reflection. The school's Christian ethos of concern for others extends beyond the school community itself and is evident in the charitable work done in the wider community, as shown for example, in the monthly community Lunch Club, fundraising for Red Nose Day and RNLI. Consequently these links between school, church and the wider community provide good spiritual development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The importance of worship is clearly evident within the life of the school. Learners experience a variety of settings and groupings for worship which enable them to experience a range of worship styles and age appropriate activities. These activities include school, church, and community based experiences. Outstanding planning, through which weekly themes are developed, enable learners to make links between worship and their everyday lives. Consequently they are enthusiastic about worship and value greatly the contribution it makes to their lives. Stimulating visual artefacts, images and/or use of a candle help learners to focus their thoughts in prayer or reflection. Consequently, spiritual development is outstanding. Learners know the Lord's Prayer and confidently speak of the value of prayer in their own lives. Because prayer is an important element of the whole school life, all stakeholders talk of support received from prayer. In worship observed a reverent atmosphere for worship was established by use of visual focus and stillness. Learners' behaviour was excellent because staff provided excellent role models. Dramatic interpretation of the symbolism of the Christian life and skilful explanation enabled enthusiastic responses from learners. Informal and formal prayer provided outstanding opportunities for spiritual development. Learners' participation and enjoyment was obvious in their enthusiastic singing. All stakeholders are fully engaged with community worship activities such as 'Messy Church' and 'Travelling Nativity' because of their high level of involvement. The effective collective worship programme is actively and enthusiastically supported by the local clergy who lead worship once a week. This involvement greatly enhances the learners understanding of the Anglican tradition. All stakeholders speak positively and enthusiastically of services held in church, for example in taking part in celebrating major Christian festivals. Consequently learners have an excellent understanding of the sequence of the Church's year. Outstanding links between school and church worship leaders, for example as in 'Lighting the Candle', support and develop distinctive Christian worship. This is an example of outstanding practice. Monitoring and evaluation of worship by governors and parents is informal, with limited evaluation by learners, and so missing the opportunity to develop further the involvement of learners in planning and evaluation of collective worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious education is good. Religious education is well planned with RE themes at the centre of whole school planning. Standards of attainment are comparable with those in core subjects. A structured Assessment scheme is in place with development to incorporate levelled assessment tasks. Learners show a very positive, open attitude and clearly enjoy religious education. Learners speak positively of the range of activities provided and learners' views are valued and respected. Learners enjoy thinking and talking about their own beliefs, as well as those of others. Learners place high value on religious education and express its importance in helping them in their future lives. This then provides clear opportunity for spiritual development. Effective cross curricular links are made where appropriate, for example in a lesson observed linking RE and ICT where learners were confidently able to discuss the importance of sacred texts for followers of different religions. Learners were able to discuss and reflect on the Christian value of respect, applying the meaning to their own and others' lives. Consequently RE provides good spiritual development. Some planned cross-curricular opportunities for spiritual development occur, for example, in a lesson observed linking Geography and RE where learners effectively linked stewardship of the natural environment, to life of faith and their own lives. Learning is promoted by clear objectives shared with learners with effective use of differentiation, time, resources and learning styles. Learners are actively involved and can explain their understanding clearly and confidently using appropriate religious vocabulary, for example, in one lesson where learners were explaining the meaning of several special stories for Christians. The subject leader is very enthusiastic, effective and confidently expresses a clear vision for RE. The quality of teaching observed is good and is underpinned by good subject knowledge. The

importance of religious education is evident throughout the school and is shown, for example, in the good quality RE displays making good links with other curriculum areas such as Literacy and Art.

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

The Headteacher and governors confidently articulate a clear vision based upon explicit Christian values which are at the heart of the leadership and management of the school. The strength of leadership and management of the school is very evident in the approach and outcomes achieved by the Headteacher and governors during recent challenging times. Good links between church and school are evident, and are spoken highly of and valued by all stakeholders. The vision is effectively shared with all stakeholders in many ways including newsletters, Parents' forum, and the ready accessibility of the Headteacher and all staff. Parents speak positively about the parents' forum and place high value on the respect shown to all. As a result, the forum provides an effective opportunity for informal evaluation of the school as a church school. Parents speak very positively of the open and welcoming ethos of the school, and say 'our school is a family'. Parents express high value on the care and support shown for all learners. Governors are effective and supportive through a range of activities in school including governor links to curriculum areas. Governors monitor and evaluate the school as a church school informally. Foundation governors have a clear understanding of their role within the life of the school and are effective in supporting the Church of England foundation. The Headteacher and governors speak of the impact and value of involvement in ongoing professional development training, for example in attending diocesan training on 'Lighting the Candle' Worship. Good links between school, church and the wider community are evident, for example in school's involvement in celebration of services in church such as monthly Family Worship and St. Piran's Day. Parents speak very highly of these popular services. Strong church links are integral to the school, demonstrated for example, through prayer support and pastoral care for all stakeholders. The links between church and school are interlinked in a range of activities including craft and worship activities. The governors are very confident with the collaborative approach of the Headteacher, and all stakeholders appreciate the strong emphasis on a team approach to the school community.

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