

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St. John's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Boreham Road
Warminster
Wiltshire
BA12 9JY

Diocese: Salisbury

Local authority: Wiltshire
Dates of inspection: 29th January 2008
Date of last inspection: 6th – 7th July 2004
School's unique reference number: 126367
Headteacher: Mrs Sue Humphries
Inspector's name and number: Mrs Jenny Pestrige (153)

School context

The school is situated on the eastern edge of Warminster, and benefits from extensive school grounds, which include a large playing field. The original Victorian buildings now provide administration rooms and an ICT suite, with the classrooms and hall provided in modern accommodation. There are 104 learners, who attend the school from across the town and the wider area. Due to the number of military families in this garrison town, there is a significant degree of mobility of learners. There are also a number of international families.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St John's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, as a Church of England school, are outstanding.

The strong and dedicated leadership of the Headteacher and governing body is resulting in a stimulating and caring environment. Due to this level of care, in and across the curriculum, all learners are enabled to make progress and their achievements are celebrated. The partnership with the church, represented by the Chair of Governors, is providing a creative and visionary level of support to the school. The school aims to create an environment where "every single child is loved, valued and cherished for their strengths."

Established strengths

- The vision and leadership of the Headteacher in continuing to develop the Christian distinctiveness of the school.
- The effectiveness of the Chair of Governors in her role, including that of representing the Priest in Charge, supported by the foundation governors.
- The pastoral care offered by all staff to all learners, particularly through the successful use of the initiative, "Enhancing Children's Learning"
- The inspirational leadership of religious education, and its impact in the lives of the learners.

Focus for development

- Continue to develop and enhance the collective worship programme, particularly through the use of visitors.

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

Learners at this school have a sense of excitement and confidence. They enjoy their learning. Learners are able to talk animatedly and with a sense of awe about their new discoveries. This is because of the quality of teaching and of the care shown, through a skills-based approach to learning. The provision and quality of extra-curricular visits, linked to topics, is enriching learners' understanding. The "Enhancing Children's Learning" initiative is providing an outstanding opportunity to develop a range of skills. The level of self-assurance of learners is outstanding. Learners have an emotional and spiritual vocabulary, which means that they are able to talk about their feelings. This is because learners know their teachers give value and worth to every aspect of their learning. This makes a major contribution to the evident well-being of all learners. Parents express a high level of satisfaction with the pastoral and academic care provided by the school. This care is summarised in the schools' mission statement and values. The centrality of Christ in the values is symbolised by a cross, around which the values are graphically shown. The values and mission statement are clearly evident in classrooms and public areas. This means that the Church of England foundation of the school is explicit. This is emphasised by the addition of the Prayer Corner and quiet area in classrooms. Learners are encouraged to write prayers, and to use artefacts such as pebbles, to reflect and be still. Relationships between staff and between staff and learners are outstanding. Relationships are characterised by kindness and the esteeming of others, which is shown by all adults in the school. The opportunities for spiritual development are making an outstanding impact in the lives of learners. The contribution of religious education and collective worship to spiritual development is outstanding. The emphasis on developing learners' understanding by using their imagination and feelings, in the lessons observed, is outstanding. Christian references, such as the concept of Jesus as the light of the world, are included in teaching across the curriculum. The qualities of the play facilities in the outdoor environment are excellent. This means that learners have an outstanding opportunity to develop physically, socially and emotionally.

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

Collective worship is central to the school's expression of its Church of England identity. The rolling programme has recently been monitored. As a result, the themes have been revised, which reflects best practice. Learners enjoy collective worship because they are well-planned, with interesting content. This also means that the behaviour of learners is outstanding. In the act of worship observed, which was jointly led by the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors, learners enjoyed acting out the story of Simeon. Other learners participated in playing recorders and bells. The range of music, singing and readings meant that learners listened attentively. All of these elements of worship included learner participation, which enhances their sense of self esteem. The emphasis on time for reflection and sensitivity to creating a special atmosphere, were outstanding. This is resulting in a significant contribution to the spiritual development of learners. The commitment of the Headteacher, governors and all staff to the collective worship programme is outstanding. For example, all staff are involved in leading worship. Learners are involved in the monitoring process, and their opinions are valued. The school's use of prayer and responses form part of the regular pattern of daily worship. This means that learners have an outstanding level of understanding of Anglican faith and practice. Links with the wider Christian community in the town are being developed. This is part of the school's attempt to enrich the experiences and knowledge of learners, and represents best practice.

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

The Headteacher has a clear vision for the Christian ethos of the school. This is expressed through policies and also through a collaborative management style. The level of support given to the Headteacher in developing the Christian ethos by the Chair of Governors, Foundation governors, and senior teacher, is outstanding. All adults working in the school attend the annual away day. This inclusive management approach is resulting in a strong team identity. The Head and senior teacher have worked extensively on developing strategies to increase the self-confidence and self-worth of learners. One parent described the improvement in the life of her daughter, following a move to the school; "my daughter feels important now". This is because all staff consistently reinforce care for each individual. This is strength of the school, because it is making a major impact in the lives of all learners. This is clearly evident for those with special educational or emotional needs. The partnership with the Church is expressed through a representative of the Incumbent. This is the Chair of Governors, who is designated as the ex-officio governor. This partnership is effective and distinctive, because of the experience and sensitivity of the Church representative. It is a positive, creative initiative, giving learners excellent opportunities to experience Christian beliefs and practices. An example of the effective Church / school partnership is the 'RE Conference' which is organised by the Chair of Governors. It is an example of outstanding practice. The Conference includes learners from schools across the town and local area. Therefore, this initiative is also an example of the positive links between the school, the Church and the wider community. The leadership and management of collective worship make an outstanding contribution to the overall Christian ethos of the school. Religious education is led and managed with enthusiasm. The coordinator has an inspirational approach to helping learners to reflect, respond and experience. This means that learners are encouraged to learn about Christianity and other world religions, in a creative and expressive way. For example, the use of stilling exercises before a topic on "A Portrait of Jesus". There is an emphasis in the school's creative approach to learning, of "listening out for God". This means that learners are developing a sense of Christian spiritual awareness. The leadership and management style of the Headteacher is encouraging and enabling learning which is based on a Christian world view. As a result, learners are experiencing Christian values through the skills-based curriculum.

SIAS report – February 2008 - St. John's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Boreham Road, Warminster, Wiltshire, BA12 9JY