

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Laurence Warborough Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Thame Road,
Warborough
OX10 7DX

Diocese: Oxford

Local authority: Oxfordshire

Date of inspection: 24 September 2007

Date of last inspection: May 2002

Headteacher: Mrs Nancy Townsend

Inspector's name and number: Mari Powell 143

School Context

St Laurence Church of England school is a small primary school situated in the village of Warborough. It mainly serves its local community.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Laurence as a Church of England school is satisfactory

The school is well established as a church school and is well regarded by its community. The quality of pastoral care effectively reflects the Christian values that underpin the work of the school. However, the headteacher has only recently begun to enjoy sufficient time to manage and lead aspects of the school, monitoring and evaluating areas such as religious education and worship.

Established strengths

- The good quality of pastoral care for all pupils.
- The interest and support of the governors and the community.
- The collaborative teamwork which is beginning to evaluate more effectively the work of the school.

Focus for development

- Build on the positive attitudes of most pupils to worship to ensure that all members of the school are fully engaged.
- Seek ways of developing the indoor environment to reflect the spiritual qualities the school wants to promote.
- Use marking and assessment to evaluate the progress that each child is making in religious education and to influence planning.

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

The Mission Statement is currently being re-drafted to give greater emphasis to the "nurturing" quality which drives the school's approach to the children and their families. The strong Christian vision ensures that all the children are cherished and the more vulnerable guided and supported by staff and other children. This also reflects the way the governors perceive their duty of care towards the staff. The children play happily together and are quick to help each other, for example, when they perceive that a child is not easily able to join in games. They are co-operative in their work and have a well developed commitment to serving others. Locally and globally, they are quick to appreciate that there are people in need who benefit from their contributions. They willingly support, for example, Water Aid in Ghana and Vietnam, Unicef and Barnardos. This knowledge and understanding of how others live have been extended through links with schools in Finland, the Netherlands and Spain. The school is now considering how to further promote high aspirations among the pupils to ensure that all are achieving their fullest potential in their academic work.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Worship is seen as a valuable opportunity to develop the pupils' spiritual and moral development and to reaffirm common values such as cooperation. The school is, therefore, beginning to review its provision in order to increase the spiritual element and engage more fully the pupils' involvement and engagement. For example, the headteacher, with staff and governors, is considering how to set up a worship table displaying a variety of artefacts and material which will provide pupils and adults with some visual focus that can be changed to suit the worship theme. There is also a genuine desire to create small areas for quiet reflection but building constraints present a challenge! The act of worship seen began effectively as pupils, to the accompaniment of Gregorian chant, walked quietly past lit candles and sat reflectively for a short period after the hall lights had been turned off. The potential for developing role play is considerable as pupils say they enjoy opportunities for active participation. Leaders of local churches make valuable contribution to worship. Pupils enjoy opportunities to attend church as a school. They also contribute to the Parish Magazine and have provided items for the Christingle celebration. Pupils' listening skills during worship are satisfactory overall. Some pupils are very engaged and listen well. The school, as it reviews its planning, is appropriately considering how it can capture all the pupils' attention, including in the singing. During a survey of attitudes towards worship, a good number of pupils said that they felt it was an opportunity "to talk to God".

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

The quality of religious education is satisfactory overall but beginning to develop some good features. This is evident in recent recorded work. The planning of topics over the year is thorough and ensures that the pupils have a sound grasp of Christianity and other world faiths. A good feature of the work of older pupils is that they perceive links between aspects of the Old Testament and what they learn about Judaism. A pupil in class 2, reflecting on the celebration of Holi, wrote "I think for the poor and rich to come together is a really good idea. All differences are put away and ensure everyone comes together." The youngest pupils observed showed a high level of interest in a role play activity about baptism and also the large collection of Christening cards they had collected. The staff have identified the need to boost some of their resources, for example, to teach Islam. They also recognise that pupils need encouragement to take greater pride in their recorded work. Some records of pupils' work are kept but assessment, for example, through marking and periodically monitoring progress, is not yet adequate to ensure that appropriate progress is made.

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

The headteacher and governors have a clear, agreed vision of the centrality of the local church school in the community. The headteacher, through the support of the governors, values recent arrangements that will give her more time and appropriate opportunities to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. Together, they recognise that it is timely to focus more sharply, for example, on how the school can reflect its Christian ethos more attractively within the building. The quality of assessment in religious education and some aspects of worship are both appropriate topics for review. The governors are very supportive of the school and dedicated to continuing to promote the good links between the school, the church and local community. The incumbent and other foundation governors know the school very well and provide invaluable practical help. They now see opportunities to ensure that the School Development Plan reflects a sharper "challenging" focus through monitoring and evaluation to ensure that the school continues to develop.