

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Michael's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Newton Road,
Twerton,
Bath
BA2 1RW

Diocese: Bath and Wells

Local authority: Bath and North East Somerset

Dates of inspection: 14 February 2008

Date of last inspection: 14 June 2004

School's unique reference number: 109155

Headteacher: Mr Dave Goucher

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Rosemary Bartlett -120

School context

St Michael's Church of England Junior School is situated at the heart of its community. There is an ongoing programme of improvement and refurbishment for the building and grounds. The school benefits from an integral unit for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. There is a two class entry and pupil numbers have risen considerably over recent years. At the time of the inspection the previous headteacher had recently resigned and the school was being led by the deputy as acting headteacher. An appointment process for a new head had begun.

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

Pupils benefit from the professional commitment of the whole staff team and the close, dynamic links with the local church.

Established strengths

- The pupils are secure, friendly and articulate
- The acting headteacher provides energetic leadership for the effective staff team
- The school has close links with the local parish church

Focus for development

- Promote the distinctive Christian vision for the school
- Strengthen the impact and monitoring of collective worship
- Provide further opportunities in religious education for visits and visitors

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good in the way it meets the needs of all learners.

The school's Christian ethos is evident in the way each individual pupil is valued. The staff team work closely together, providing a high level of care for all pupils. High expectations of behaviour are consistently upheld across the school, and modelled by the staff. A pupil says: "Teachers help people with their problems." The very effective EBD unit has clear aims, achieved within a highly caring context. The unit has a very positive impact on the whole school community. Pupil behaviour across the school is good, with many examples of individual thoughtfulness and kindness such as, when pupils include one another in discussions. The recently created school "houses" provide a clear spur to pupils' efforts in both attitudes and achievement. The school gives a high profile to healthy eating and to sport. Participation in school teams and matches with other schools contribute well to pupils' physical wellbeing and to their positive self image. Residential visits such as those to the Mill on the Brue also have a strong impact on pupils' confidence and cooperation skills. A pupil comments: "We learn to count on each other". There is a very good variety of extra curricular activities.

The well run school council contributes actively in many aspects of school life. Councillors

were involved in the school's planning for the splendid sensory room, which has a strong positive impact on pupils' social and emotional well being. Through the school's effective use of its good resources for personal development, pupils become confident and caring members of the community. Pupils enjoy feeling empowered by the staff. In the words of a pupil: "One of the best things is that they give us responsibilities." Pupils demonstrate awareness of their surrounding community and they can see the value of their regular clear up activities in Carr's Woodland. They participate enthusiastically in fund-raising for a number of causes, both local and farther afield. They learn to recognise their own feelings and to empathise with those of others. Because of the school's clear inclusive spirit pupils learn to celebrate diversity. In religious education pupils have many very good opportunities to learn about Christianity and other world faiths. They express a lively interest in different religious practices across the world. RE lessons where pupils design a place of worship and reflection contribute richly to pupils' imagination and creativity. The effective choice of activity, preparation of materials and good use of background music combine to create an outstanding experience for pupils. During a much enjoyed RE week pupils engage in a very good range of activities including cooking, hand painting and Sikh play games. In RE pupils are encouraged to ask the "big" questions of life, and they show a readiness to consider different responses.

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

The daily acts of worship and in particular the quiet times of reflection and stillness at the end of the school day, have a good impact on the school community. With a lighted candle for focus in each class, they provide a haven of peace, which clearly benefits all those taking part. Morning worship is planned with the active support of the vicar who leads a weekly act of worship. This is a time, much appreciated by the pupils, in which clear Christian teaching is imaginatively communicated through very good use of drama and ICT. The content is well matched to the range of pupils present. The significance of individual choice and the need to take small steps to achieve the final goal of becoming a person who is naturally happy and kind are imaginatively likened to the training of a weight lifter. Resources such as the SEAL materials for pupils' social and emotional development, contribute well to collective worship. The school now plans to review the resources and content of worship and to further develop monitoring. There are growing links between school and church worship. The church run 'Kidz Klub' is held after school in school and a good number of pupils take part. School collective worship is held in St Michael's parish church on special occasions. All pupils are presented with a Bible during their school career, a gift from the people of St. Michael's. A number of pupils express a real interest in prayer. They are thoughtful and reflective in their responses and they cite examples of the effects of prayer from their own lives. Their comments include: "I think God can only answer your prayers".

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

The acting headteacher's energetic leadership and the effective teamwork of the staff have ensured that the school's Christian values have been well maintained throughout the school's recent period of change in leadership. The welfare and progress of the pupils are at the heart of the school, which now plans to develop further its distinctive Christian vision. The governors support the school well. Pupils benefit from the school's very good community links. A sense of the history of the area is enriched by the contribution made to history by a local war veteran. Remembrance Day is regularly marked with a school commemoration at the Twerton war memorial. The school has close and dynamic links with its parish church which include a very good, redeveloped website. The local police constable is a regular visitor and friendly presence in school, supporting pupils' social awareness and community skills. The management of RE is outstanding. It is enthusiastically and effectively coordinated through the development of the syllabus, staff support and pupil assessment. The school is now well placed to provide further opportunities for visits and visitors in RE. The school benefits from its very good and fruitful links with the Diocese. The areas identified for action in the last report have been addressed.