

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Michael's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Lower Church Rd

Sandhurst,

Berkshire.

GU47 8HN

Diocese of Oxford

LEA: Bracknell Forest

Date of inspection: 18.9.07

Date of last inspection: 28.01.02

School's Unique reference number: 109973

Name of Headteacher: Mrs Antoinette Flannigan

Inspector's name and NS inspector's number: Mrs June Hardcastle NS 400

Context

This school has just over 200 pupils, many of whom come from favourable home circumstances. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. Almost all of are British white heritage. The current headteacher took up her post in September 06.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Michael's Sandhurst as a Church of England school is good.

A vibrant Christian ethos permeates the school with Christian principles firmly embedded in the daily practice of school life. St Michael's has an excellent reputation in the community. Its leadership has shown outstanding commitment and perseverance and the ability to establish strong relationships and regain trust. This has led St Michael's through a difficult time, to one in which the whole school community is working together, reaffirming their vision and seeking to make it a reality.

Established strengths

- The outstanding quality of leadership provided by the headteacher and the support of the Governors
- The longstanding relationship with the local church and the respect of the community
- Christian teaching and values exhibited and practised throughout the daily life of the school

Focus for development

- To have a complete R.E. curriculum that complies with the Locally Agreed Syllabus, and to put measures in place for assessments of teaching and learning
- Establish strategies for evaluating the quality of Collective Worship and the impact it has on the school community
- To implement fully the plans of the Collective Worship coordinator and priest to embed elements of Anglican practice into school worship on a regular basis.

St Michael's Sandhurst, through its distinctive Christian character is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners.

Children at the school join a big family where they are cared for and nurtured. Parents and governors speak of the school as a place which 'plays through the parables and stories of the New Testament', in sowing seeds of faith, shepherding the vulnerable, caring for the sick and welcoming the stranger, whether they be children or adults. A group of parents spoke of the 'continuity of faith between school and church' as being a strength of the school. Around the school and in the playground there is an air of confidence and a spirit of helpfulness. The children say that they have been helped in this by the Buddy and Peer

Mediators systems. A year 5 pupil said, " Here there are loads of people you can rely on and no-one lets you down." Parents speak of an enriching environment and the confidence they have in the staff. "This is somewhere I trust. I have peace of mind when my children are in school." The certificates given weekly celebrate academic, sporting and behavioural achievements. All learners feel valued whatever their gifts and talents and they are able to bring to that weekly gathering any awards they have received outside of school. Children learn about the needs of those less fortunate than themselves through fundraising for a school in Kenya and for Christmas Child. Children take the Christian message to the local residential home for the elderly by singing there, and in doing so, furthering links with the community. The Parents Association work tirelessly to provide money for school projects such as library books and playground equipment, in order to support the life of the school.

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

Collective Worship has a secure place in the life of the school and is valued by adults as well as pupils. It has a strong Christian focus with major Christian festivals being celebrated in the church as well as in the school. The school council affirms the way in which collective worship is contributing to their spiritual development "This school has taught us that it is important to pray." Children enter worship quietly and freely share their hopes for the future. In a time of reflection they are given the opportunity for a time of quiet, during which they are encouraged to think of the love of God for every person and their uniqueness. However, planning, evaluation and links with the Anglican heritage has been lacking until recently. The new collective worship coordinator has plans in place in which the worship will express the Anglican tradition as well as honouring other faiths. During this term the school is to learn the Lord's Prayer and its meaning and it will be incorporated regularly into collective worship. The parish priest leads assembly once a week and he is to assist the school in making the worship distinctively Anglican through greetings and affirmations.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory.

The three lessons that were observed were good, capturing and maintaining interest. There was a rich variety of tasks, including cooking for Rosh Hashanah in year 6 after considering the nature of repentance, and problem solving about being jealous in year 2 following hearing about the Elder Son. Skilful questioning in Foundation, year 2 and year 6 checked knowledge and developed understanding. Partner work clarified thinking and made links between the material being studied and personal living. A yr 2 child talking with a partner said of the Elder Son "I know how he feels. I am the oldest one and the young ones get all the treats." ICT resources were well used to focus input. The church building is used for lessons, for example about baptism, where the parish priest welcomes the classes and leads the sessions. However, the curriculum is at early stages of development and there are no assessment or monitoring procedures yet in place. The school is to receive help with these after which the long- term effectiveness of the teaching and learning will be evaluated.

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

The Headteacher's vision and Christian commitment contributes significantly to the success of St Michael's. She is well supported by the staff, many of whom have been recently appointed. Through questionnaires, information evenings and 'the open door', the views from all stakeholders are taken into account by the leadership and management team of the school, with parents confirming how important this is to them. They know that they will be listened to. The Governors have a good understanding of the school's status as an Anglican school, valuing the Christian ethos and prospective parents and staff are made aware of this and so support this Christian vision. Those who lead and manage are committed to the school's further improvement, especially in developing collective worship

and the planning and assessment of R.E. They have identified how they can work with the parish and with the diocese to achieve this. Conversations with parents affirm that they are extremely appreciative of the work of the school and its impact on their children for their academic, social and spiritual progress.

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