

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Combined School,

Minnicroft Road,

Burnham,

Bucks.

SL1 7DE.

Diocese of Oxford

Local Authority: Buckinghamshire

Dates of inspection: 31st March 2008

Date of last inspection: 8th March 2004

School's Unique reference number: 110450

Name of Headteacher: Mrs Elizabeth King

Inspector's name and NS inspector's number

Mrs Margaret Maskell No.136

Context

St Peter's Church of England Combined School is smaller than the average with 150 pupils, of which the majority are white British. Although pupils' socio-economic circumstances are generally similar to the national picture, there is considerable variation in their individual, home circumstances, as the school serves some areas of relative deprivation. The proportion of children with learning difficulties is above average and several have emotional and behavioural needs.

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

Established strengths

- A strong productive relationship with both the local church and the community.
- An ethos of Christian love, care and support.
- Strong leadership of the headteacher supported by a team of effective governors.

Focus for development

- To ensure further developments in collective worship as identified in the School Improvement Plan.

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

Pupils are happy and secure in school. They are valued as individuals and benefit from a warm family atmosphere, showing care and concern for one another. Speaking with pupils, it is evident that they appreciate the range of systems, which are in place to reward their achievements. These are effective in building confidence and confirm the school's aim in the mission statement, which speaks of promoting self-esteem through Christian values. Conversation with parents confirms that the quality of support, encouragement and care, for all in the school community, including some with very particular needs, is outstanding. The headteacher and staff are excellent role models, promoting the Christian ethos of care and concern. The school makes good provision for the well-being and personal development of its pupils as demonstrated both in circle time and during PSHE lessons. RE enhances the spiritual and moral development of pupils. Children have a good understanding of what it means to stay safe and adapt to a healthy life-style.

Behaviour management focuses on developing, rather than punishing the child. Pupils know that each day represents a fresh start and with it a measure of forgiveness for earlier mistakes. Parents fully appreciate that their children attend a church school and are being taught Christian principles. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and it is clear that they appreciate the good range of school clubs, creative activities and outside visits which are arranged on their behalf. These enrich pupil experience and personal development. The children also respond positively to a number of initiatives, such as being play leaders or members of the school council, which allow them to take responsibility for the well-being of others.

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

Collective worship is good and occupies an important place as a key element of Christian witness in the life of the school. Worship is consistently and recognisably Christian. It has a strong Christian focus and observes all the major Christian festivals. Timetabling two separate acts of worship for the two Key Stages offers the opportunity for activities which are well matched to the age of the children. Gathering together as a whole school family on Friday is appreciated by the children and, until recently, has been a time when the vicar has visited and occasionally led worship. Visitors from other denominations attend and also lead worship. The children both know and use the Lord's Prayer, as well as the school prayer. They are used to a time for reflection before the formal prayers begin. Children speak of enjoying acts of worship, one Key Stage 1 pupil said, "I like the singing - it makes my heart feel good". Another said, "I want to say prayers to God". The older children like to participate by acting out bible stories. Pupils have been involved in the evaluation of worship and the school has taken notice of their suggestions. Planning for worship has recently been identified as an area for further development. The school should now ensure that repetition in following years is avoided. Close links with the church coupled with attendance at special church services, introduces the children to the church calendar and the Anglican tradition.

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

The vision and commitment of the headteacher are both powerful features of a distinctive Christian ethos within the school. The governors work alongside the headteacher challenging and promoting this ethos, both within school and around the local community. Prayer is central to the life of the school. There are many signs and symbols, which demonstrate the school's Christian foundation. These include various RE displays, school prayers and a cross which is to be found in the hall. The school enjoys a close and productive relationship with the local church. Until the recent interregnum the clergy have been making regular visits to the school, leading worship and giving pastoral support. The school makes visits to the church for all the major Christian festivals helping to ensure that pupils are aware of the Anglican tradition. The children appreciate being involved not only with the church but also with the local community. Many of the children attend the Easter workshop, which takes place at the church. The headteacher, staff and governors have all begun the process of self-evaluating the Christian dimension of the school. Collective worship and RE have both been selected to form part of the current School Development Plan. Pupils are actively involved in community events, helping them to recognise the importance of the school within the community and the support it gives to their spiritual and personal development.