

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Swithun's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Kennington

Oxford

OX1 5PS

Diocese of Oxford

Local Authority: Oxfordshire

Dates of inspection: 18 March 2008

Date of last inspection: March 2004

School's Unique reference number: 123177

Name of Headteacher: Mrs Jill Evans

Inspector's name and NS inspector's number: Mrs Mari Powell 143

Context

St Swithun's is a larger than average primary school which has long established links with its local church and wider community. It also works in close partnership with a class belonging to the Kingfisher Special School with which it shares a site.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Swithun's school as a Church of England school are satisfactory

The school, through its belief in the value of each individual, is committed to ensuring the development of all its pupils in keeping with its status as a church school. It has recently taken steps to successfully increase its effectiveness by improving the behaviour management of a minority of older pupils whose attitudes to school did not sufficiently reflect the school's Christian status.

Established strengths

- The school's inclusive approach that is effectively helping pupils to develop good relationships and respect for other members of the community.
- The awareness of global disadvantage that encourages the pupils to support a variety of good causes.
- The measures which are beginning to improve pupils' attitudes to learning, their aspirations and their social and moral development.

Focus for development

- Take steps to ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to develop their ability to express themselves in spiritual terms.
- Monitor and evaluate acts of worship to establish a clear understanding of the difference between acts of worship and "assembly" and to ensure consistency in relation to class and key stage worship.
- Monitor how the displays around school linked to worship, religious education and overall personal development consistently reflect the high quality to which the school aspires in its provision for the pupils' overall well-being.

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

The school has a very clear and well published statement of values which is firmly rooted in a Christian context. It reflects well the school's mission to care for, value and nurture the well-being of every member of the school. Some key policies have recently been implemented which are beginning to have a positive impact on the self-esteem and consequently on the behaviour, of pupils. Most pupils are considerate and kind towards one another and are very energetic in their support of good causes to benefit others. They contribute well to a local charity to provide aid for countries in Africa. They work and play harmoniously. Representatives of the school have attended an anti-bullying conference and made recommendations that are reflected in the pupils' growing awareness of the effect they have on others. The "Values" themes such as "tolerance"

and “perseverance” are well supported during school worship and reinforced when opportunities arise during lessons in religious education and planned opportunities for pupils’ social and emotional development. The frequent sharing of activities with the Kingfisher class encourages pupils to be responsible for and inclusive of others. The school recognises the benefits of developing a more consistent approach to pupils in relation to what might be expected of them, both personally and academically. This has the potential for raising the profile of the school’s stated Christian mission and enabling all members of the school to realise their aspirations more fully.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

The themes proposed for acts of worship are compatible with the Christian foundation of the school and reflect the pattern of the liturgical year. Major church festivals are celebrated and enjoyed. Opportunities are also provided for raising pupils’ awareness of the multifaith nature of the wider and local community. Pupils spoke with interest of the festival of Divali and of the daily worship practices of Hindu families. The local vicar and a foundation governor are very active in their support of school worship. They value the fact that, on occasions, the school holds acts of worship in the church. The most recent celebration of Christingle was a good example of how the church link supports a school and community partnership. Prayers and opportunities for reflection are regular features of worship. However, greater use could be made of prayers written by pupils. Good practice in some classes involves the compilation of a class book of prayers for use before lunch. Nevertheless, many pupils are not very secure in their knowledge of the Lord’s Prayer. The school recognises that there is room to develop the quality of its worship table as a more effective focus for reflection and spiritual development. Monitoring and evaluation of worship are not strong and do not provide a sufficiently clear view of how the different arrangements for daily worship as opposed to “assembly” coherently and consistently ensure that pupils make gains in their spiritual development. Nevertheless, a good example was seen during an act of worship in key stage one where children listened and responded very sensitively to the Easter story.

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

School leaders are genuinely committed to the school’s vision of itself as a church school. This fact is reflected in school documentation, in the items displayed in the entrance foyer and in several other areas of the school. Staff are very welcoming to visitors and provide a comforting, listening ear to pupils and parents who seek their help. The headteacher provides a good role model in this respect. However, the external signage of the school does not clearly indicate the school’s Anglican foundation. The headteacher recognises the importance of her leadership role in supporting other school leaders and governors to undertake a programme of incisive monitoring and evaluation of the school’s on-going development as a church school. The recent approach to behaviour management and compilation of the “Golden Rules” are already enhancing pupils’ social and moral awareness. Similarly, increasing opportunities for pupils to undertake responsibilities and to ensure that pupils’ views are heard, are developing their sense of pride in their school as well as the quality of their work. A new coordinator for religious education is beginning to provide appropriate support to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the importance of the subject in the overall provision of a church school. The school is well supported by opportunities provided by the Diocese to implement recent changed requirements. The headteacher, staff and governors are already reviewing some key policies and are now well placed to monitor their implementation and evaluate the next steps the school needs to make in order to move its development forward.