

National Society Statutory Inspection of Schools Report

Urchfont Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Cuckoo Corner

Urchfont

Devizes

SN10 4RA

Diocese of Salisbury

Local authority: Wiltshire

SIAS Inspection: April 23rd 2009

Date of last inspection: November 4th 2005

URN: 126366

Headteacher: Jackie Holton

SIAS Inspector: Muriel Griffiths (NS268)

School Context

Urchfont Church of England School has 100 pupils on roll. Most pupils live locally but some attend from the surrounding area. There are four classes. The accommodation provides a good learning environment. The school is set in large grounds which have been attractively developed.

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

Christian values permeate the whole life of the school and everyone feels cared for and valued. Pupils are proud to be part of the school's strong Christian family. The school provides many opportunities for children to flourish in their learning and personal development.

Established Strengths

- The strong emphasis on Christian values.
- Outstanding personal development enables pupils to become mature, caring individuals.
- Children's confidence in expressing their views and opinions because of the secure and accepting ethos.

Focus for Development

- Ensure that collective worship is monitored and evaluated more thoroughly to improve provision.
- Create more opportunities for planned times of focused Christian reflection throughout the day to support pupils' spiritual development.
- Develop ways to more effectively seek parents views on the schools distinctive Christian character

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

There is a delightful family feeling that permeates the whole school and a very strong commitment to the development of the whole child within the context and environment of an extremely supportive school community. Pupils know that they matter as individuals. They are very proud of their school and describe it as a place

that 'feels safe' and where 'we learn many new things and enjoy exciting activities'. Parents feel that the school has 'a safe and nurturing environment' and it is a place 'where every child is valued'. Since the previous inspection, when an area for development was to 'move to a more explicit acknowledgement of its Christian aims', the school has made its Church foundation more explicit by considering its mission statement and aims. These are clearly displayed and state that 'Christian values are central to the ethos of our school'. The school also celebrates its Church of England foundation with many visual displays and symbols around the school although it is not overtly clear in the school's logo.

The school's Christian character is strongly reflected in the children's sense of well-being and personal development. All adult members of the school community provide very good role models and there are high expectations of pupils' behaviour and care and respect for one another. Excellent procedures are in place for encouraging positive behaviour that are known and understood by all members of the school community. The school uses its Christian character to nourish and encourage the spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of learners, especially through collective worship and RE (religious education). Time for quiet reflection is provided during collective worship as part of time for prayer but there are limited opportunities for personal reflection within the school curriculum. Issues are handled sensitively and parents are confident that if they have a problem, it will be dealt with promptly. Relationships are excellent between staff and children and amongst both groups, which strongly support the good learning that is taking place.

Pupils know that what they say will be valued because of the accepting ethos. This was evident in an RE lesson observed during the inspection when older children were discussing the 'rules for living'. There are very good reward systems in place which are celebrated every Friday, and children are delighted to be named in the 'Golden Book'. Many opportunities are taken to help children to think of those less fortunate than themselves through fund-raising for various charities, both local and international such as 'Send a Cow' and 'Operation Christmas Child'. Pupils are pleased to have a voice through the School Council and are delighted that their views are not only listened to but also acted upon.

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

Collective worship has a high priority in the daily life of the school. It is consistently and recognisably Christian. Pupils enjoy the daily act of worship and say that they especially enjoy it when they are actively involved such as by reading prayers or acting out a story. They have opportunities to write their own prayers. One of the areas for development in the previous inspection focused on improving planning of collective worship. The school now has a programme of themes in place. As well as Bible stories and Christian values, themes for worship also include major events in the Christian calendar which give pupils a better understanding of the importance of these festivals to Christians. Children comment that the daily act of worship 'helps us to believe in God' and 'we listen to stories that help us in our lives'.

During the inspection, in an act of worship observed, pupils entered the hall respectfully knowing that this was an important time in the school day. Everyone joined in all elements of worship enthusiastically and enjoyed opportunities to contribute. There were times for quiet reflection and prayer, which children used well. An appropriate setting for worship was provided with a candle and a cross.

The Rector is a regular visitor to lead worship and also discusses the planning of worship with the headteacher. This further strengthens links between the school and the church. Major Christian festivals, such as Harvest, Christmas and Easter are celebrated in the Parish Church, and also the annual Leavers' Service. Children especially enjoy services held in church when they all have opportunities to be actively involved. Parents appreciate the opportunities to join their children on these occasions. Children have been consulted about collective worship in order to

discover its impact but the school feels that this could be in more depth and so inform the planning of future acts of worship.

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

The quality of leadership by the headteacher and governors, well supported by the staff, contributes significantly to the success of this Church of England school. They ensure that the foundation remains at the heart of the school. Governors are actively involved in evaluating the school's performance as a church school with senior staff. The school has a very good understanding of its strengths of the school and the areas that need to move forward. The school could strengthen its partnership with the Diocese by accessing in-service training to assist it in moving forward further as a church school.

The RE subject leader provides good leadership and is both effective and enthusiastic in her role. As suggested in the previous inspection, planning has now been developed in RE and schemes of work are fully in place.

The Rector is a supportive and regular visitor to the school who helps in many ways, such as by providing much valued pastoral support. There are mutually supportive links between church, school and local community. The Parish presents Bibles to children in year 3 for their use in school and then again as a gift when they leave the school. Education Sunday recently provided a celebration on 'The Earth is the Lord's' held in the school to which the whole community were invited. Parents recognise the strong link between school and church and feel that this contributes to the children's well being. They are regularly consulted about the school's performance but not about the school as one with a church foundation.

There is a very small minority of parents who do not feel that their concerns are always acted upon whilst most parents do not share the same view. They feel that all members of staff are approachable and ready to listen. There is a delightful family feeling that permeates the whole school.