National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Wantage Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Newbury Street
Wantage
OX12 8DJ
Diocese of Oxford
LA: Oxfordshire
Dates of inspection: 23 January 2007
Date of last inspection: New school
School's Unique reference number: 123165
Name of Headteacher: Mr Philip Hibbs
Inspector's name and NS inspector's number: Mrs Mari Powell 143

Context

Wantage Church of England Primary school arose from an amalgamation of the former Infant and Junior schools. Most pupils come from the local area and are mainly of White British background.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Wantage Primary as a Church of England school are good with some outstanding features

It is a good church school with outstanding features. The Christian ethos is very clearly articulated by the headteacher and consistently promoted by the staff and governors. It impacts very well on the pupils who show a high level of spiritual and moral development.

Established strengths

- The headteacher's outstanding leadership in communicating a clear Christian vision
- The consistency with which the staff support the all round development of the pupils
- The relationships that have a strong impact on the pupils' personal development and their academic progress
- The supportive role of the governors and the ministry team

Focus for development

- Continue to review the planning, delivery and evaluation of worship
- Provide greater focus for pupils' cultural development to match the very high standard of pupils' spiritual and moral development

The school through its distinctive Christian character makes outstanding provision for the needs of all learners

The school makes outstanding provision for promoting the self-confidence and self-awareness of its pupils. They receive an excellent level of care that enables them to shine academically and to develop the self-esteem that underpins their very positive attitudes to lessons and other activities. When asked how he enjoyed lessons in religious education, one pupil replied promptly "Everything is interesting here!" The teachers and support staff have a very consistent approach to the pupils, reflecting well the mission statement and aims of the school. This encourages the pupils to be honest about their relationships with each other, to talk readily about occasional conflicts and to be conciliatory in a way that ensures the smooth running of the school. Pupils have a strong sense of citizenship and their contribution to their local community. They appreciate and show a high level of respect for members of the town who help them in a variety of ways. The link with the local church is very strong. It enhances pupils' spiritual development and also supports the school's promotion of pupils' awareness of and contributions to global matters. Pupils spoke with sensitivity of their concern to fund the schooling of a Kenyan boy and to purchase goats for Ugandan farmers. Through lessons in religious education and other

subjects, the cultural development of pupils is broad and enriching. However the school has rightly identified the need to sharpen the focus of awareness of the rich cultural fabric of this country.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Acts of collective worship are important in the life of the school. They are planned within a secure framework and in line with the school's Christian foundation. The local ministry team has a rota for leading them which provides variety and interest. Pupils say they enjoy school worship as well as the celebration of festivals of the liturgical year in the local church. One pupil remarked "I feel magical in church." The school emphasises the value and importance of prayer. It is a strong feature of all school worship and occurs at other times in the day. Reflection is a strength of the school and contributes to the calm atmosphere. Displays and notices around the school encourage pupils to reflect individually or with friends. An effective example was the prayer wheel in a year 6 classroom. Learning in religious education is effectively reflected in acts of worship. It enriches pupils' understanding of the importance of faith. The school ensures that, for example, stories from the bible feature prominently to communicate worship themes. Where older pupils learn about aspects of world faiths, there is provision for using the life and works of prominent faith leaders and key celebrations as themes for worship. The school is actively evaluating the distinctiveness of its worship by opening up a dialogue with staff, pupils, governors and church representatives. Together, they are reviewing the planning, delivery and the way they evaluate worship to ensure it continues to fully reflect the school's aims.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is good and there are some outstanding features

The school has gone through a period of significant change. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership because he is able to articulate a clear vision of the distinctiveness of the school as a church school. Relationships within the staff team and with pupils are a strong feature of the way the school has developed into a happy, aspiring community. The governors work positively to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the school. With the headteacher they are appropriately developing the role of foundation governors to ensure that the school's ethos is clearly understood and communicated. In partnership with the Diocese, school staff and the ministry team have began to review aspects of worship to ensure that it responds to a range of needs and is inclusive. The development of the leadership role in religious education also supports the positive attitudes of staff and pupils to teaching and learning in the subject. Christian values are explicit in the mission statement and aims of the school. They are also reflected visually in attractive and thought provoking images and artefacts, from the mural beside the main entrance to nooks and crannies around the building.