

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Wembdon St. George's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Brantwood Road,
Wembdon,
Bridgwater,
TA6 7PS

Diocese: Bath and Wells

Local authority: Somerset

Dates of inspection: June 11 2007

Date of last inspection: September 2000

School's unique reference number: 123825

Headteacher: Rev David Hatrey

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Pauline Dodds (217)

School context

St. George's Church of England Primary School is a large school in a village on the outskirts of Bridgwater. The village of Wembdon has been extended by a large modern housing area. There are 332 children, aged 4 to 11 currently on roll, but this is predicted to expand steadily in the next few years. The grounds have been developed to provide an adventure playground, an enclosed football area, a covered outdoor space and wildlife area. The school has had significant additions to its building over the years. It provides a pleasant, secure and welcoming environment in which the children are proud to be educated.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St George's Church of England School are outstanding.

The school provides a distinctively Christian atmosphere in which to educate all its learners. Children's care and education are a priority, achieved by placing Christian values at the heart of all it does.

Established strengths

- The strong leadership of the Headteacher with his clear vision for the school, as a church school
- The established planning, monitoring and assessment of RE and Collective Worship
- The commitment of the Foundation Governors to effective links with St. George's Church
- The supportive environment which aims to make all members of the school community feel valued and special

Focus for development

- To further enhance the environment with areas to give opportunities for spiritual development e.g. a quiet garden, banners in the hall
- To enrich the RE curriculum with themed days or weeks, perhaps creating further multi-cultural input
- To continue to provide varied opportunities for staff to develop their own spirituality
- To continue to develop links with the Parish Church when the new vicar arrives

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding in the way it meets the needs of all learners

The emphasis placed on Christian values is greatly appreciated by children, parents and governors, and enhances the community feel of the school, despite its size. Christian values are modelled by all staff and made explicit in their dealings with children and in all policy documents. There is an ethos of praise and celebration which has a powerful impact on pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Tragedies in recent years have led to

a deep and mature sense of comfort and encouragement, evident in adults and children throughout the school. One pupil told me that 'No-one laughs at you when you cry – they just give you a tissue.' The children claim that they feel valued and listened to, safe and secure and that they generally enjoy their learning.

Religious Education is extremely well planned and thoroughly assessed throughout the school, providing opportunities for discussion about God and faith issues, the effective use of story and artefacts and a knowledge of Christian heritage. Work sampling, lesson observations, monitoring and an observation of a Reception/Year1 class during the inspection, are all evidence of the importance given to meeting the needs of all the learners. The curriculum could be further enriched by the introduction of themed days or weeks, given over to creative activities, visits and visitors, with an RE focus.

The school has distinctive displays produced regularly by a dedicated teaching assistant, as the outworking of her faith, as well as information about the local church. Classroom and hall displays of prayers and SEAL (Social & Emotional Aspects of Learning) activities proclaim the Christian nature of the school and provide opportunities for reflection. It is hoped to purchase banners in the hall to celebrate festivals and enhance biblical teaching.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good with many outstanding features.

Worship is a distinctive time and considered central to the life of the school. It is carefully planned and led by the Headteacher, other members of staff, and until recently a Parish Youth Worker. It is hoped the new vicar will join the team and that links with the Parish Church will be strengthened as a result. The use of the Parish Church for services at major festivals contributes greatly to the children's spiritual growth and understanding. The centrality of worship was demonstrated by the monitoring of each act of Collective Worship by the Foundation governors over a week, after which a clear development plan was written. Links between the theme of Collective Worship and subsequent RE lessons deepens the experience and understanding for the learners.

Opportunities are given for children to develop their understanding of the elements of worship, as they plan and lead frequently. This could be further enhanced if they were involved in monitoring and evaluating. The children sing well, are familiar with the Lord's Prayer and some Anglican responses, and are given time for reflection. A large wall cross and a candle are visual stimuli, part of a good collection of resources. Coloured cloths to reflect times in the church year would further reinforce understanding. Grace is said at lunchtime and children pray in class before they leave at the end of the day, in classes. Boards in classrooms where children can write prayers or their feelings are further evidence of prayer. Pupils, parents and staff spoke of the comfort given them by acts of worship in the church and the school, in recent times of bereavement

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

The Headteacher, Senior Management Team and Foundation governors work hard to promote a distinctive Christian vision for the school, of which all members of the community speak confidently and proudly. Collective Worship, Spiritual Development and RE policies, recently revised, clearly state the school aims and ethos, based on its Christian foundation. The Headteacher's commitment to Christian beliefs and values is a role model for all, and ensures a good Christian education is provided for the children. His pastoral care for children and adults contributes significantly to their personal and professional development. The staff team helps to implement the distinctive and shared vision in all areas of the curriculum, as they feel trusted and valued. They deliver a good RE curriculum, supported by an excellent subject leader. Since the self-evaluation process was completed, care has been taken to ensure that new and established staff attend training from the Diocese, in RE and teaching in a Church of England school.

The ethos of the school is outstanding, displaying many Christian values such as love, care and value for the individual. There is a real desire for a meaningful partnership with the Parish Church and opportunities to reach out into the community. Issues raised in the last inspection have been addressed over time, and money well spent in the development of RE and Collective Worship.

One child described the school as 'children with happy faces'. Against this backdrop the learners make very good progress and the school is an outstanding example of a Church of England school.

SIAS report June 2007 Wembdon St.George's Church of England Primary School,
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