

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

West Monkton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

School Road,
Monkton Heathfield,
Taunton
TA2 8PA

Diocese: Bath and Wells

Local authority: Somerset

Dates of inspection: 29th January, 2007

Date of last inspection: September 2001

School's unique reference number: 123804

Headteacher: Jane Bevans

Inspector's name and number: Rev John Angle

School context

West Monkton Church Primary has 234 pupils and is situated on a mature estate at the north eastern edge of Taunton adjacent to a large comprehensive school. More than half the classes are housed in Elliot style buildings. Children can only visit the Parish Church by bus as it is some distance away in the old village. There has been almost a complete change of staff in the last three years.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of West Monkton as a Church of England school are good

West Monkton is a good church school. It is a learning community with effective and enthusiastic leadership and strong links with the local parish church community. It has an influential Christian ethos in which children are secure, happy and develop a knowledge and understanding of Christianity, its purpose and value in their daily lives. The school has the capacity to improve and become an even better church school.

Established strengths

- Well developed and strong links with the local parish church, its priest and local community
- Strong, enthusiastic and inspirational encouragement and support from the Head and the leadership team

Focus for development

- Provide In-service Training for all staff to ensure high quality teaching and learning for Religious Education, Collective Worship and pupil's Spiritual and Moral Development. All the necessary policies and plans for implementing these areas of school life should be completed.
- Use the already established material of the Social & Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme and the "Every Child Matters" agenda as a springboard for supporting and developing further, in a holistic way, the spiritual and moral development of the children.

The school makes good provision to meet, through its distinctive Christian character, the needs of all learners.

Relevant and sensitively prepared policies, a wide range of extra curricular activities including the after school "Chipmonks Club", special learning programmes (SEAL, Health Week etc) and appropriate attention to children with special needs, ensure all learners feel valued and special. Children generally enjoy coming to school. Good behaviour and children's achievements are celebrated and children are given many opportunities to succeed not only in the classroom but also in sport and the performing arts. Children encouraged to demonstrate in all aspects of school life and relationships the values inherent in Biblical

teaching. A particular focus is Galatians chapter five, verse twenty two, which is displayed in the school hall – “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control”. Children are also encouraged to demonstrate forgiveness, to make choices and to take responsibility. They are given the opportunity to voice their thoughts and express their feelings in Collective Worship, RE, PSHE, Circle Time and within the School Council. Their values and attitudes are expressed practically through contact with a school in Ghana, visiting local residential homes, in fund raising during Lent and by initiating and encouraging changes in their environment through their School Council. There is a strong sense of mutual support and care amongst the children, staff and governors. Conflict is dealt with compassionately and fairly. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children is good. Displays and artefacts around the school indicate the school’s distinctive Christian character and the values represented by the Christian ethos. There are strong links with the local church and pupils and parents are encouraged to participate in its activities and services – some of which now take place in the nearby Village Hall and in the school.

Collective worship has a very important place in the life of the school and its impact on the school community is good.

Specially prepared themes are developed in a variety of ways using appropriate songs, music and prayers, various artefacts and symbols and simple liturgical responses. All staff are involved. Classrooms have a “reflective area” which supports and gives a relevant focus for both class and whole school collective worship. Children appear to enjoy acts of collective worship, often responding to what they hear in their own time with fund raising (following the Blue Peter appeal) or making a collage of doves (following the theme of peace and peace-making). They are eager to be involved. They sing enthusiastically – “glorious singing” one parent commented! They show respect for the opinions of others. Learners develop their understanding of Anglican faith and practise through celebrating festivals, using Anglican set prayers and responses and by their involvement in the local church life. During Lent this year all children will be encouraged to join with the church community and use a child’s version of a booklet entitled “Love Life – Live Lent”. The local parish priest (who is also the Chair of Governors) is very involved and supportive of the life of the school. Prayer has an important place in the day to day life of the school – grace is said at meal times, there are prayer books and prayers pinned on wall displays in some class rooms and a prayer box is to be set up in the school hall. A new policy for Collective Worship, more detailed planning, evaluation and staff INSET in relation to collective worship is progressing steadily with enthusiastic and informed support from the co-ordinator and expertise from the Diocesan Education Department

The leadership and management of the school as a church school is good with some outstanding features.

A distinctive Christian vision for the school is made explicit in the school vision statement and through identifying clearly specific objectives to show what a strong Christian ethos looks like in practise. The school leadership encourages living by the values inherent in the teaching of the New Testament. These values support the behaviour management processes in the school, serve as foundational to many other aspects of school policy and practise and are firmly embedded in the key priorities of the School Development Plan. The Head gives clear direction and inspiring encouragement. She is strongly supported by the staff and governors. The local parish priest, the foundation governors and Diocesan Officers work in partnership with the school leadership to raise spiritual awareness, to encourage “living the values” and to enhance the school’s Christian ethos, seeking to bring children to increasing spiritual and emotional maturity. RE is given an important place in the life of the school and the newly appointed RE Co-ordinator is being encouraged by the leadership team to develop strong and effective RE where standards are high and learners are achieving well. Parents appreciate the special qualities of the school where their children are supported and helped to flourish as confident individuals.