

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Bartholomew's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School Wigginton

Common Field

Wigginton

Tring

Hertfordshire

HP23 6EP

Diocese of St Albans

LA: Hertfordshire

SIAS Inspection: 5th June 2008

Previous S23 Inspection: 26th January and 12th February 2004

URN: 117463

Headteacher: Mrs J Kemp

SIAS Inspector: David Morton

Inspector No: 515

School context

St Bartholomew's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is a smaller than average school serving the village of Wigginton, near Tring, and the surrounding area. Pupils are mainly from white British backgrounds and proportions of pupils with Special Education Needs or eligible for free school meals are below national averages. Pupils on roll have increased significantly in the last two years.

Summary Judgement

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Bartholomew's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School as a Church of England School is good.

This is a good church school which has been transformed over the past two years. At the centre of the local Christian Community St Bartholomew's instils pupils with the Christian values of love, care and respect for others.

Established strengths

- Pupils care for each other and their role in resolving playground conflict
- The distinctive Christian ethos that enables children to flourish and develop as individuals within a calm, peaceful environment.
- Links between the school and parish clergy that nurture and nourish the whole school community
- The transformational leadership of the Headteacher in developing the Christian ethos of the school

Focus for development

- Raise standards in Religious Education to match those in other subjects
- Increase opportunities for pupils to learn from religion and what it teaches them about how to live their own lives
- Develop creative ways to allow children to reflect in depth about what they hear in Collective Worship

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

The Headteacher and governors have worked extremely hard over the last two years to create a strong united staff team who are committed to providing a high quality education in a distinctively Christian environment. This has had an outstanding impact on the school's Christian distinctiveness. Foundation governors describe the school as a place where pupils are cared for, valued, encouraged and supported. A calm and peaceful atmosphere exists throughout St Bartholomew's. Pupil behaviour is outstanding. They feel safe and secure in school. Older pupils talk proudly about their role in the 'Sort out Squad', the school's peer mediation service run each playtime. They are considerate and caring to each other especially those children with special needs. Pupils' SMSC development is also outstanding and is rooted in Collective Worship and the emphasis placed on applying the teachings of Jesus to daily life. Pupil care is outstanding. This is a school committed to listening to its pupils and acting on their concerns. Based on Christian values this approach has a significant effect on pupils' self esteem, their confidence and levels of maturity. Accommodation is good and has been significantly improved in recent years. Displays reflect the Christian ethos of the school and the use of prayer corners in each class enable children to share their feelings, concerns and to say sorry to each other. Use of outside space is outstanding. Seating areas surrounded by living willow enhance playground areas, giving children peaceful, calm areas to reflect, rest and talk to friends.

The impact of Collective Worship on the school community is good.

Collective Worship has a central place in the school community and determines the overall Christian ethos of the school. Provision has improved significantly in recent years due to the strong positive partnership that exists between the Headteacher and local parish clergy. This relationship enhances Collective Worship provision. Planning for Collective Worship is good. Acts of worship follow the diocesan scheme and reflect the liturgical calendar. Pupils visit church for major festivals and at other times of the year. They enjoy worshipping in church. Evaluation of Collective Worship is also good. Acts of worship are evaluated by the school council and the parish clergy and the school responds sensitively to pupil feedback. Children talk confidently about their enjoyment of Collective Worship and their participation in all aspects of it. The observed act of Collective Worship was good. Visual resources and a simple dramatic re-enactment ensured a clear understandable message focussing on love and compassion was shared with pupils. Pupil behaviour and response was good. They clearly enjoyed the act of worship and appreciated the gentle humour that was present throughout. The act of worship would have been further enhanced by the inclusion of times that allowed children to reflect in depth about what they were hearing. Worship through singing plays an important part in Collective Worship at St Bartholomew's. During the observed act of worship singing was outstanding and significantly enriched the worship experience.

The effectiveness of Religious Education is good.

Religious Education has been subject to significant development over the past two years and currently forms a major part of the School Development Plan. This has been organised by the Foundation Governors and the Headteacher in her role as Religious Education Coordinator. Improvement over the past two years has been outstanding, significantly raising standards of provision. Planning is now consistently good and is monitored effectively through scrutiny of work and lesson observations that are undertaken by both the Headteacher and the R.E link governor. Adoption of the newly published diocesan R.E units has further enhanced provision which covers a range of world faiths including Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Teaching is now good overall. Lessons are characterised by well structured teaching, good questioning and high levels of pupil respect. In an observed lesson Reception pupils' behaviour was outstanding, enabling them to discuss and reflect on someone who was special to them. Pupils enjoy R.E and comment on the interesting things they learn. The school takes pupils' self evaluation of R.E seriously and has recently altered how they teach as a result of pupil feedback. This is good practice and should be applauded. Recent improvements in R.E have yet to fully impact on pupils' written work. Standards are satisfactory when compared to those reached in literacy, numeracy and science. Work remains focussed on learning about religion although recent theme days, such as Class 2's Islam day, indicate more reflective work is starting to take place. The school should create further opportunities for pupils to learn from religion and should seek to raise standards of pupils' written work so it matches that of other subjects.

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

This is clearly a distinctive church school with a strong Christian Ethos that impacts on all areas of school life. The leadership of the Headteacher is outstanding and she has had a positive affect on the school since her arrival. Through the introduction of a new ethos statement and clear systematic planning she has led the transformation of the school's Christian character and effectiveness. Governance is good and is increasingly effective in evaluating the school's progress and in challenging it to improve further. Foundation governors have played a full and active role in developing provision and policy in Religious Education and Collective Worship and visit school on a regular basis. Their decision to seek the appointment of a new Headteacher two years ago has led to significant improvements in the effectiveness of St Bartholomew's as a church school. Links between local churches and the school are outstanding, local Baptist and Methodist fellowships actively supporting the school alongside the parish church. Together they nurture and nourish the school's Christian ethos and the whole school community. The parish clergy are outstanding. They are an integral part of the staff team, leading worship, running extra curricular activities and participating in classroom support on almost a daily basis. Pupils benefit from regular visits to church and themed days such as 'Ascension Day' make an outstanding contribution to pupils' spiritual development. St Bartholomew's contribution to the local community is also outstanding. It is committed to welcoming those of other faiths, broadening pupils' knowledge and cultural awareness and has allocated significant financial resources to achieve this. The school's commitment to care for others is clearly evidenced in the level of giving to charity and the way the school building continues to be used by the community after school hours.