



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report



Aldbury Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School
Stocks Road, Aldbury, Tring HP23 5RT

Diocese of St Albans

LA: Hertfordshire
SIAS Inspection: 4th June 2009
Previous S23 Inspection: 27th April 2006
URN: 117382
Headteacher: Miss Jayne Bowles
SIAS Inspector Name: Mrs Mel Adams
SIAS Inspector No: 58

School Context

The school is a small primary school located alongside St John the Baptist church in the village of Aldbury. There are four classes including Reception and the Key Stage 1 and 2 classes which are taught in mixed year groups. Standards are very good. Pupils are admitted on residency in the village and surrounding civil parish followed by pupils from a number of other villages. Almost all the children are from white British backgrounds and have English as a first language. There have been significant changes in the past six months with the appointment of a new Headteacher and new Vicar.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Aldbury Primary as a Church of England school are good

Aldbury is a good church of England school, working well in partnership with the church. The Christian ethos underpins its Christian character enabling children of all ages to develop well in a safe and happy environment.

Established strengths

- The established effective partnership between the school and the church
- The commitment of both the newly appointed Head teacher and Vicar, and chair of governors to Church school development

Focus for development

- To make explicit the vision and values of the school as a church school and ensure that they are shared with all stakeholders.
- To further raise standards by ensuring the Church school self evaluation becomes part of the regular evaluation and planning cycle.
- To plan for opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum
- To provide children with further opportunities for reflection during the day.

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

The school brochure, along with the school prayer and the Golden rules articulate some of the values which support the day to day life of the school community. The school has yet to make explicit how these can have an impact on the curriculum, motivation and achievement. Through the SEAL materials children have a growing understanding of their own and others personal development, enabling them to work and play together. In RE children learn about Christianity and other faiths, and can also develop some spiritual understanding, such as the class observed in the inspection who were thinking about what is precious to them. Children are proud of their eco schools commitment which supports spiritual development and through caring for school animals and class gardens they gain further understanding of their responsibility to take care of the world around them. The school has identified the need to develop opportunities for Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural development across the curriculum. There are many opportunities to support charities both local and world wide. Relationships throughout the school between staff, and children are good. Children are able to express some of the values they learn in assembly which affect aspects of their motivation, such as being helpful, looking after yourself and being safe. Where difficulties arise, those in leadership have a commitment to resolving issues motivated by Christian values such as forgiveness and compassion. Classrooms display the school prayer along with books and artefacts to support learning in RE and these make a contribution to spiritual development. The entrance hall displays children's learning about special places, along with a cross which a younger child pointed to as 'the place where Jesus died'.

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

Children speak of needing the daily assembly not only for the school to come together as a community but also as a place to be calm and think about themselves. The playing of carefully selected music enables the children to enter respectfully and ready to participate. Singing is good, led well by the recorder group and piano. Children listen well, and participate both in volunteering to help as observed in the inspection where children contributed to the presentation of the theme of the fruits of the spirit, and in answering questions. Understanding gained in religious education can contribute to collective worship, such as the child learning about Pentecost who was able to say that Jesus is a unique gift of God, and that though the gift of the Holy Spirit, God is always with us. Children know the school prayer, the Lord's prayer and the grace along with lunch time and end of day prayers. There are not yet opportunities for children to reflect throughout the day. There is a good understanding of the church calendar, including significant festivals such as Harvest, Christmas and Easter which are celebrated in church. The church is also visited regularly to support learning and the vicar has recently worked with a class to develop their understanding of the Eucharist and its relationship to Passover. Planning is steered by the Diocesan guidelines. The Head teacher normally leads worship, with the vicar regularly leading once a week. Collective worship forms part of the annual development planning cycle alongside RE, but is not yet evaluated.

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

The vision is currently steered by the school prayer which encompasses the 'need to value ourselves and others' and the school aims describe maintaining links with the local church to support the caring Christian ethos. These are implicitly understood by many members of the school community and contribute to the church school identity, but have yet to be explicitly articulated, shared and understood by all stakeholders. The new Head teacher Vicar and RE co-ordinator, along with the Chair of Governors, have a growing understanding of, and commitment to, developing an agreed vision informed by Christian values in order to drive forward church school developments. Stakeholders are regularly consulted but this does not yet include church school development. The recently appointed RE co-ordinator is aware of the importance of further developing the opportunities for spiritual development in RE. Parents value the church school ethos in including learning about morals, developing self esteem and allowing children to express themselves and develop personally guided by the church. This is illustrated by the parent who described a child beginning to say prayers at home and had asked for a bible. RE and collective worship feature in the annual development plan which is monitored by governors. Systematic church school self evaluation and monitoring have yet to become part of the regular school evaluation and planning cycle. The school has identified the need to provide further training in aspects of church school development. The established partnership between the church and the school is good. The newly appointed Head teacher and Vicar, along with the Chair of Governors are working closely together to build on the long established partnership and are committed to developing the vision and values of the school as a church school. The school regularly takes part in church services, particularly through the participation of the junior choir. Members of the school community appreciate and benefit personally and spiritually through the support and prayers of the clergy. The church routinely includes the school in prayers. The school writes regularly for the village newsletter and participates in village events such as May day. Children are given an understanding of the needs of the wider world though supporting a number of charities which includes the support of a hospital in India and a village in Uganda.