



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Diocese of St Albans



Ardeley St Lawrence Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School School Lane, Ardeley, Stevenage SG2 7AJ

LEA:	Hertfordshire
SIAS Inspection:	22 nd March 2007
Previous S23 Inspection:	3 rd – 5 th February 2003
URN:	117420
Headteacher:	Christine Gibbard
SIAS Inspector:	David Morton
Inspector No:	515

School context

Ardeley St Lawrence is a small school serving a dispersed rural community to the north of Stevenage. Most of its pupils are of white British heritage. Twenty percent have identified learning difficulties, none are eligible for free school meals. Accommodation is good with bright welcoming classrooms and outstanding outside facilities. Until September 2006 the Head teacher held a 0.7 teaching commitment. Recent staff appointments have now freed her to focus on developing the leadership potential of all her staff.

Summary Judgement

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ardeley St Lawrence as a Church of England School is outstanding. Central to the local community, the school enables children to flourish in an atmosphere of love, respect and care based firmly on Christian values.

Established strengths

- The outstanding leadership of the Head teacher and her impact on the Christian ethos of the school.
- The high quality of relationships at all levels that demonstrate Christian values.
- Impact of the school's Christian ethos on the SMSC development of all learners.
- The relationship between the school and the local parish and its effect on Collective Worship.

Focus for development

- Ensure priorities contained within the School Development Plan for R.E have clearly defined outcomes based on school self evaluation.
- Increase levels of participation in whole school Collective Worship by Foundation Stage children.

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

Ardeley St Lawrence is rooted in its local community. Relationships at all levels are outstanding and reflect Christian values. Children feel safe, secure and happy. Through the use of school council family groups, children care for one another, sharing their feelings and views on a range of issues. Older children flourish undertaking the role of group leaders in ways that model Christian values and behaviour to their peers. Pupils' SMSC development is also outstanding. Parents value the 'strong family orientated atmosphere' where children grow and develop a greater understanding of being part of a community. They believe that the school gives their children the best start possible to their education and the local community would be impoverished if the school was not there. Use of the school environment to promote spiritual development is outstanding. Displays are of high quality and reflect the ethos of the school. Children are actively encouraged to be involved in developing the school grounds, growing plants, developing a mini beast area and creating a school pond. School buildings are used sensitively. The school hall with its altar table as a focal point provides an outstanding place for the whole school community to celebrate together. The school has exceptionally strong links with a school in Kenya, which are facilitated by the Head teacher. This year the link between the two schools has been extended and developed. It will include visits to Kenya by a primary sports trainer from the local sports college and a retired Police Liaison Officer, who lives in the local community.

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

Collective Worship has a central role in the life of the school. The relationship between the local parish and the school impacts significantly on the quality of Collective Worship. School Mass is celebrated by the Priest in Charge each week. Children act as servers and lead prayers and the mass is open to all members of the local community. Children have a strong understanding of Anglican faith and practice through their participation. Planning for Collective Worship is good and children are actively involved in self-evaluating acts of worship. Pupil attitudes are outstanding. They participate enthusiastically, behave well and respond sensitively. This was demonstrated during an observed act of Collective Worship. A dramatic re-enactment of the last supper by Year 2 children was deeply moving, allowing all children to respond and reflect on the significance of this event to Christians. Currently Foundation Stage children only attend whole school Collective Worship once a week. On other days of the week they hold their own acts of worship and reflection. This is an area for development and the school should utilise its strengths in relationships to facilitate this.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

Children enjoy RE and attitudes are good. Pupil progress in RE is good. Good teaching and assessment lead pupils to make progress that is above national average. Throughout the school children are encouraged to question, explore and to respect others' beliefs. Whilst learning about the Passover KS1 children asked meaningful questions and listened attentively as children shared their own personal experiences of the festival. Understanding of other faiths is improving and the school is committed to further extending this area. This was demonstrated in a recent Saturday morning visit by 22 KS2 children to a local Hindu temple. Leadership of RE is good and is now shared between the Head teacher and another teacher. This positive relationship has the capacity to improve the subject further. School improvement planning for R.E is underdeveloped. Priorities for improvement should be clearly identified and success criteria should have defined and measurable outcomes.

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

The leadership of the Head teacher is outstanding. Parents, staff and governors attribute the distinctive Christian character of the school to her leadership. The staff team strongly support the school's Christian ethos. New staff speak of the impact the school's Christian character has had on them since their arrival. The relationship between the parish priest and the Head teacher is outstanding, nurturing and supporting the school's Christian ethos. Governance is good. Governors support, encourage and challenge the school to improve in an effective manner. They regularly share in the life of the school, foundation governors providing a visible link between the parish church and the school. Governors are aware of the school's areas for development and have clear plans on how to move the school forward. The integration of Ardeley St Lawrence into the local community is outstanding. The leadership and management of the school allow all connected to the school to feel valued, special and included.