



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

**Bayford Church of England Primary School
Ashdene Road, Bayford, Hertford SG13 8PX**



Diocese of St Albans

LA: Hertfordshire
SIAS Inspection: 15th April 2008
Previous S23 Inspection: March 2003
URN: 117387
Headteacher: Peter Jessop
SIAS Inspector Name: Lyn Field
SIAS Inspector No: 151

School Context

This small school serves families in Bayford and many who choose to come from the surrounding area. Almost all pupils are White British and come from a range of social backgrounds. When they start school they are working at levels that are broadly average for their age and the proportion with learning difficulties or disabilities is slightly more than in similar schools.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bayford as a Church of England school are outstanding.

The headteacher leads a team of people who each make a significant contribution to the spiritual life of the school. Their pupils thrive in an atmosphere where Christian values are brought to bear on every aspect of school life. Parents say that their children 'feel loved and lucky to be in this school'.

Established strengths

- The shared vision of the school's leaders that gives clear direction to its development
- The spiritual leadership of the headteacher
- The importance of worship in the life of the school
- The response pupils make to opportunities for spiritual reflection

Focus for development

There are no significant areas for development as the school is continually working to improve the impact of its work as a church school.

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

Relationships in the school are excellent because of the genuine concern people show for each other. The staff teach pupils to express their feelings in an open and honest manner. They model how to resolve issues in a way that reflects Christian values. This is the basis of the mutual support that exists between adults and children. What is unique in this school is that pupils take responsibility for their own spiritual development. The subject leader for religious education is inspirational in this area and pupils talk enthusiastically about how they use question boxes, the new reflection room and their own reflective diaries. They think deeply about how they could do things better and put into action the messages they have heard in worship.

This is a truly inclusive school because the whole community is committed to making sure that all pupils benefit from everything the school has to offer. The rector joins in visits to places of worship of other faiths so this extends the discussion of how beliefs affect people's lives. Parents become involved in helping their children to support pupils who may be finding life difficult and this affirms the family ethos. The headteacher's active links with a community in India ensures that the school's charity work has real meaning for pupils. They know that not all children grow up in the same way and this is expressed by one pupil who said 'Jesus shares out his love, so we do too'.

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

Pupils enjoy worship because it is an important and distinctive part of every day. When it is a celebration assembly or a special event, the occasion still retains the special atmosphere of an act of worship. The parents who regularly attend, value this time, irrespective of their own personal faith, because it celebrates the worth placed on each child. The vicar is a frequent and welcome visitor, sometimes as leader, sometimes as worshipper. Her close knowledge of the school means that what happens in worship supports what pupils are learning in the classroom. Music makes a particular contribution to worship because of the headteacher's specialist skills. This clearly adds to the pupils' experience of how it feels to belong to a worshipping community especially as they understand the words they are singing. A detailed record of worship is kept and this is building a rich resource for all staff. The school is increasingly using simple rituals and pieces of Christian art to help pupils think about the deeper meanings of worship. For example, the rector uses sculptured footprints and a shepherd's staff in telling stories. These are not just story prompts but focus children on the key messages involved. The headteacher regularly checks the use pupils make of these symbols because the staff and clergy continually reflect on the impact of what they do. They are currently giving thought to how pupils might be involved in leading rather than just taking part in worship. In the Foundation stage, pupils clearly enjoy the time of 'Thought for the Day' before they go home. This links the activities of the morning to learning about God and objects or stories are placed in a quiet corner for children to return to when they wish. This time is skilfully led so that they learn skills in prayer and reflection that help them to make the best use of worship as they move on through the school.

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

The headteacher leads a team of exceptional people who are totally committed to a school where spiritual growth is a key factor in enabling children to do their best. They are not content with how things are and are constantly reshaping the curriculum to improve not just the opportunities for pupils, but how well they use them. There is excellent communication between colleagues in the church and the school. This allows a lively interchange of ideas that enrich what the school provides for its pupils. For example, there is a good understanding of what is in place to equip children to cope with loss or change in their lives. Equally, exciting activities are planned that inspire and challenge them.

The spiritual life of the school has a ripple effect on the whole community. Parents have seen the compassion that characterises the care of their children and the benefit of developments such as the teaching about other faiths. This means they are confident to support new projects such as the introduction of the reflection room.

The foundation governors play an effective role in monitoring and maintaining the Christian ethos of the school. They feel that the strength of the headteacher's leadership provides them with a clear vision to support and enables them to plan strategically. They make decisions based on deeply held Christian values. This means they take enormous care to meet the individual needs of adults and children whilst taking into account the educational development of the whole school community.