



**National Society
Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report**



**VICTORIA FIRST SCHOOL
PRINCE EDWARD ROAD
BERKHAMSTEAD
HERTS HP4 3HA**

Diocese:	St Albans
Local authority:	HERTFORDSHIRE
Dates of inspection:	6 TH OCTOBER 2006
Date of last inspection:	5-7 TH MARCH 2001
School's unique reference number:	117423
Headteacher:	MRS JANET ROBINSON
Inspector's name:	MRS MEL ADAMS

School context

The school is average in size, catering for 237 pupils from the aged of 3-9 years. The catchment area is mixed, although generally advantaged socially and economically. The school has Healthy Schools accreditation and the 'Eco Award'. Attainment on entry is average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and none are new to learning English. A low proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals.

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

An outstanding school based on and motivated by the values of its Christian foundation, Victoria First School provides an excellent environment in which all children can flourish in all aspects of their learning and personal development. These values are based on the Mission Statement which aims for a Christian family framework, providing a rich and fulfilling education. Staff, children, parents and Governors are fully aware of the high expectations which maximise opportunities for all children. Children are very clear in their understanding of the Christian education provided by the school and understand that it is helping them to choose their own values for living.

Established strengths

- The outstanding leadership of the Headteacher in establishing the Christian ethos of the school, encompassing the school's vision of inclusiveness based on the Christian values of respecting and loving each other as God loves us.
- Excellent Acts of Worship which children and adults understand to be a special time for thinking, praying and reflecting.
- Monitoring, and regular evaluations by all stakeholders, demonstrating very strong pupil voice, which help to shape decision making in all aspects of school life.
- Outstanding learning and teaching in Religious Education, led by a dedicated and highly committed co-ordinator.

Focus for development

- To devise systems for gathering observational assessments during Religious Education lessons
- To further establish Anglican heritage, including the Christian year and the year 3 and 4 Eucharist

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners. Grade 1

The Christian ethos of the school is very strong, and is apparent in all areas of school life from documentation and displays to learning and teaching, and relationships. The commitment to meeting the needs of all learners, passionately driven by the Headteacher, creates an environment of mutual respect in which all children can flourish. The school's inclusive aim ensures the children from all cultures, along with their families feel valued, and they contribute to the study and understanding of different faiths. Foundation Governors are fully supportive of the school, and act as critical friend through monitoring and evaluation. Children are happy and secure, and have a range of strategies for expressing their concerns through the School Council, Eco-committee, Worship committee and problem boxes in all classrooms. Pupil voice is very strong and impacts on developments throughout the school. Staff work together well, implementing the aims of the school, and in this way also provide good role models for children.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding. Grade 1

The daily act of worship is central to the life of the school community. The recent change of name from assembly to worship is understood by children, who see it as a time to think and pray, and as one child explained, 'to think about all the amazing things God has done'. Worship is well planned around Christian themes and aspects of the Church year, and is led by the Headteacher and other staff, the rector and a number of other visitors. Worship is held occasionally in Church, and there is an annual Eucharist for year 3 and 4. The planning should be developed to include aspects of Anglican heritage and further use of the Church for worship. The impact of the worship is outstanding on the children's sense of responsibility and spiritual development, and children can describe how what they hear helps them to make right choices and look after the world which God created. Regular class worship gives children opportunities to share their learning in Religious Education, such as the year 1 and 2 class presentation on Creation, which gave opportunities to worship and consider what God is like. Regular monitoring by the Deputy Headteacher, Governors and pupils provides evaluation for further developments.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding. Grade 1

Learning and teaching in RE is outstanding. It has a high status alongside the foundation subjects, and is regularly monitored through classroom observations, work scrutiny and a tracking system. The co-ordinator provides clear leadership and support which impacts on the quality of planning, learning and assessment. Children are enthusiastic about RE and after one lesson thanked their teacher, explaining how much they had enjoyed their learning. Higher level questioning, thinking skills, and thinking time, along with secure subject knowledge, provide for children of all abilities to learn effectively. Links with other subjects, for example learning about the use of metaphor in a lesson on symbolism in the Bible, ICT, and Art, the use of mind maps to organise information, and time for reflection, all provide a richness to the learning and result in confident discussion and high quality recording. Children in the Foundation stage, still very new to school, are able to use their 'reflection box' to create space and time for thinking and praying. Children appreciate that they learn about world faiths to help them to develop their own understanding.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding. Grade 1

Outstanding leadership by the Headteacher, RE co-ordinator supported by the foundation governors ensures that the Christian vision and ethos of the school provides a safe and happy environment for all children. Regular monitoring and evaluation, with rigorous feedback, provide effective evaluation for future developments. The staff are clear about the vision and the expectations that each child should have the opportunity to learn and develop socially, morally, spiritually, culturally and academically, and are wholly committed to the monitoring process which provides ongoing challenge. The views of children, parents and governors are sought and acted upon. Children's involvement in community activities such as dancing and singing, regular charity fund raising including links with a pre-school in Sri Lanka, and the support of the Church through prayers and financial support for school projects, results in an effective partnership between the school, Church and local community. Parents speak highly of the school, and value the impact of the Church school values on their children's learning and personal development.