



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Diocese of St Albans



Great Gaddesden Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

LEA:	Hertfordshire
SIAS Inspection:	20 th September 2007
Previous S23 Inspection:	26-27 th September 2000
URN:	117433
Headteacher:	Mrs K Johnston-Grant
SIAS Inspector:	David Morton
Inspector No:	515

School context

Great Gaddesden Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is a small school serving a dispersed rural community to the north of Hemel Hempstead. Most of its children are of white British heritage and many travel into the village to attend school. It is a smaller than average primary school with 76 children on roll. The proportion of children entitled to free school meals is below average. The number of children who have learning difficulties or disabilities is greater than in many other primary schools of this size. Accommodation is satisfactory and has been greatly improved in recent years.

Summary Judgement

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Great Gaddesden Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School as a Church of England School is good.

This school is valued by pupils, parents and the local community for the way its Christian character nurtures and cares for children, enabling them to flourish and grow as they progress through the school.

Established strengths

- The distinctive Christian character of the school.
- The quality of relationships, based on Christian values, that nurture and care for all children.
- Links with the local parish church its priest and lay reader.
- The use of ICT to support and enhance the teaching of R.E.

Focus for development

- Review and amend the school's mission statement, aims and vision statements to ensure they adequately reflect the distinctive Christian character of the school.
- Create a dedicated strand within the SDP to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of the school's Christian ethos, vision and values.
- Introduce regular self evaluation of Collective Worship by children.

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

Relationships across the school are outstanding and reflect Christian values. Children feel nurtured and cared for. School Council talk about a school where children are happy, look after each other and where there is no bullying. Older children grow and develop, caring for younger children when they start school. They share the responsibility for caring for each other in a way that models Christian values and behaviour to their peers. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also outstanding. They respond thoughtfully when discussing their own and others' beliefs. Older children show the ability to create and discuss questions that explore different religious beliefs and practice. Through multicultural theme weeks and by visiting places such as the local Buddhist Monastery children have excellent opportunities to learn about other religions and cultures. Relationships with the local community are good. The relationship with the local parish church is outstanding. Both the parish priest and lay reader visit school, leading Collective Worship and participating in R.E lessons. Parents identify the distinctive nature and ethos of the school as the reason that led them to choose the school as a place to educate their children. Use of display across school is outstanding. Displays in the central areas of the school reflect the school's distinctive Christian character. Displays like the school prayer board encourage children to be an active part of a worshipping community.

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

Collective Worship has an important place in the life of the school. Acts of worship are well planned and recorded. Following weekly themes, they are led by a variety of staff and occasionally by children from the church bible club. Children participate enthusiastically in Collective Worship. They enjoy the variety of activities that take place especially role playing bible stories. Collective Worship leaders provide good opportunities for children to sing, pray and to quietly reflect. Prayers shared during worship are often written by children and displayed on a prayer board. Other prayers reflect the Anglican foundation of the school. The use of artefacts and visual resources to enhance worship is good and promotes interest from the children. Foundation governors attend Collective Worship on a regular basis. The role of the local lay reader in leading Collective Worship is good. She has an excellent relationship with the children and provides a strong link between school and the local parish.

The effectiveness of Religious Education is good.

The leadership of the Head teacher in her role as R.E coordinator is good. This subject has improved since the last Section 23 inspection. Medium term planning is good and short term planning ensures clear learning objectives and outcomes. Systems to monitor and evaluate quality of teaching are in place. Assessment has been introduced and indicates children are reaching standards similar to children of their age. Quality of teaching is good in all classes. All staff make outstanding use of ICT to enhance their teaching and children's learning. At the start of a Y5/6 lesson children were asked to reflect on their feelings about the earth whilst watching 'Google Earth'. This evoked thoughtful, spiritual responses. All teachers balance learning about religion and reflection about religious belief. This is making an outstanding contribution to children's spiritual development. Children's attitudes to R.E are good. They show good levels of prior knowledge and participate readily. R.E themed displays are good and enhance children's understanding of different religions.

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

The Head teacher's leadership and her articulation of the Christian vision of the school is good. She has maintained the distinctive Christian character of the school despite challenging circumstances. Her emphasis on the development of positive relationships based on Christian values impacts on every area of school life. School governance is good and is improving. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school. They monitor and evaluate areas of the curriculum including R.E and Collective Worship and are involved in policy reviews. Parents strongly support the Christian character of the school. This is evidenced by the fact that the majority of foundation governors are existing or former parents. Excellent relationships exist between the school and the local parish church and other faith groups especially the local Buddhist monastery. All staff and governors share the self evaluation process and have a clear, accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. However, there is no separate strand within the SDP that monitors and evaluates the school's Christian ethos, vision and values. Public documentation also under emphasises the school's distinctive Christian Character which should be celebrated. This should be reviewed and updated.