



**Nash Mills Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
Belswains Lane, Nash Mills, Hemel Hempstead HP3 9XB**

LEA:	Hertfordshire
SIAS Inspection:	16 th January 2008
Previous S23 Inspection:	18-19 th January 2005
URN:	117418
Headteacher:	Mrs R Washford Mower
SIAS Inspector:	David Morton
Inspector No:	515

School context

Nash Mills Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School serves a socially and culturally diverse community on the southern outskirts of Hemel Hempstead. Most of its pupils come from the local area. It is an average-sized school and about a quarter of its pupils come from minority ethnic groups. The attainment of the children joining the Nursery is below the levels expected nationally for three-year-olds. The proportion of pupils identified with learning difficulties is below the national average. The Headteacher joined the school at the start of the autumn term.

Summary Judgement

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

Valued by the local community this school provides a distinctively Christian environment for children to be happy, secure and to grow spiritually and morally

Established strengths

- The distinctive Christian ethos of the school and its impact on pupil wellbeing
- The quality of relationships that support and nourish pupils' spiritual and moral development
- The mutually supportive relationship between the parish church and the school
- School leadership and governance

Focus for development

- Develop recording and self evaluation for Collective Worship
- Revise and update the R.E policy and Scheme of Work to ensure wider opportunities to learn from religion
- Formalise arrangements for governors to monitor the impact of Collective Worship and RE on pupil's spiritual and moral development

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

Nash Mills C of E VA Primary School is clearly recognised as a Christian school by the community it serves. Outward looking, the school raises significant amounts of money each year for a range of charities. Its Christian ethos and vision is clearly demonstrated in the positive relationships that exist at every level across the school. Pupil attitudes towards school and each other are outstanding. This was witnessed in Collective Worship where two Y6 girls sat alongside a child with Special Educational Needs, caring for him and allowing him to access the act of worship. Pupils of all faith backgrounds recognise and value the school's Christian ethos. All feel happy and secure at school. Pupils speak of few incidents of poor behaviour. There is a calm, peaceful atmosphere that provides outstanding opportunities for pupils to grow and develop spiritually and morally. This is reinforced by visits out of school such as the regular Y6 visit to Coventry Cathedral which staff describe as inspirational. A strong staff team, sharing a common vision, provide outstanding support to the Headteacher and governors in maintaining the school's distinctive nature. Community relationships are good. Strong links with the local parish church and its clergy enhance the work of the school and its ethos development. The School's JIGSAW club, an extra curricular activity, allows children to express their care through prayer for the whole school community and each other. Accommodation is good and excellent plans are in place to improve it further. Displays sympathetically reinforce work in R.E and the Christian ethos of the school.

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

Worship is central to the life of this school. Placed at the start of the day worship provides opportunity for the school community to meet together to celebrate, pray and reflect. Pupils enjoy Collective Worship. They feel calm and peaceful after acts of worship and this is reflected in their behaviour. In an observed act of worship children were asked to reflect on what it meant to be a 'light to the world'. This was reinforced by the presence of a candle, visual resources and was rooted in the children's own experience. This is good practice. The school benefits from excellent music provision and this further enhances acts of worship. Pupil's participation in Collective Worship is good. Each class takes turns to lead Collective Worship, writing prayers and choosing worship songs. Pupils of all faiths participate enthusiastically. Worship is led by a range of staff and visitors including parish clergy and a local foundation charity. Pupils' understanding of Anglican prayers and responses are good due to the regular involvement of the parish priest. The commencement of each act of worship with The Candle Prayer is highly effective in preparing the school community for worship. Planning for Collective Worship is good. However, record keeping and self evaluation of acts of worship is not in place and is an area for development.

The effectiveness of Religious Education is satisfactory.

Planning and delivery of Religious Education is currently in transition. The arrival of the new Headteacher, a Religious Education specialist, has prompted a thorough review of provision. Teaching is satisfactory and is based upon the Solihull scheme of work, parts of which are now 12 years old. Where teaching is strongest Y2 children were introduced to the Qur'an in an atmosphere of reverence that prompted responses of awe. Use of finger puppets to retell a bible story in Reception engaged children's interest enabling them to respond at an age appropriate level. Pupil standards in Religious Education are satisfactory. More emphasis needs to be placed on allowing pupils to learn from religion, reflecting on its impact on how people behave and act. The school policy and scheme of work should be revised to allow this to happen. Monitoring of teaching and learning are satisfactory. Plans are in place to develop teaching and learning in Religious Education but have yet to be implemented or have an impact on classroom practice. Governor monitoring of Religious Education, whilst in place, needs development to ensure it evaluates the impact of Religious Education on pupil's spiritual and moral development.

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

This is clearly a distinctive Church School that is well led and managed. Nash Mills C of E Primary School is a focal point for the local community. Parents strongly support the school and its ethos. They comment positively on the 'family feel' of the school and its 'caring and warm atmosphere based on Christian values'. This is now being reflected in an increase in children attending special services at the local parish church. Foundation governors have a clear vision for the school that is firmly based on Christian values. Their management of the transition between Headteachers and their role in maintaining strong Christian leadership for the school demonstrates this clearly. The new Headteacher provides good leadership for the school. She has settled quickly into her role building strong relationships with pupils, parents, staff and governors. She has an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development and is passionate about maintaining the school's distinctiveness as a Church School. School documentation is good and clearly reflects the school's Christian heritage. This is also evidenced in the school's entrance area and across the school buildings. More importantly the school's ethos is reflected in the attitudes and behaviour of the whole school community. This is due to the good leadership provided by the senior leadership team and school governors.