



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Mary's Church of England Primary School
Dellsome Lane, Welham Green
Hatfield AL9 7NF



Diocese of St Albans

LA: Hertfordshire
SIAS Inspection: 21st March 2007
Previous S23 Inspection: 15th – 18th November 2004
URN: 117497
Headteacher: Alison Botarelli
SIAS Inspector Name: Lindsay Fraser
SIAS Inspector No: NS 107

School Context

This is a smaller than average primary school whose pupils are drawn from the village of North Mymms, where there exists a mixture of private and local authority housing. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is increasing and currently stands at 12.8%. Attainment at entry is broadly average, although there is a high proportion of pupils joining the school after the age of five. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is in line with national figures with four children holding a statement of special educational needs.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Mary's Primary School as a Church of England school are good

The close relationship with the local church and clergy has led to the school's growing distinctiveness as a faith school. The headteacher, the governing body and the staff of the school are implementing the vision effectively and the school's positive ethos is beginning to impact upon higher standards of achievement and behaviour, especially in the lower part of the school.

Established strengths

- There are very close links with the local vicar whose influence and support is impacting upon practice within the school and upon the pupils' attitudes
- Collective worship is of a good quality from which pupils are able to derive inspiration.
- The very good provision for the development of pupils' personal development enables them to develop positive relationships and to grow in self esteem and confidence.

Focus for development

- Provide training for all members of staff who teach Religious Education so that lessons are stimulating and inspirational.
- Develop the monitoring of Religious Education with particular regard to progression through the school and differentiated activities within lessons.
- Ensure that communications with parents promote the good ethos of the school as a church school, the inspirational Collective Worship and the positive impact of the school upon pupils' personal development.

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

The thorough and cohesive work of the school undertaken in spiritual and emotional development is central to children developing good attitudes towards their learning and their relationships. Much work has been done on the development of language skills and strategies to improve emotional development. Pupils are becoming more confident in discussions about their anxieties which enable problems to be addressed.

Pupils feel valued and special through the use of team points, through the support they receive from all members of staff and the responsibilities which they are given in Year 6 to care for the younger children. Pupils feel that conflicts are dealt with compassionately and that the needs of the victim and perpetrator are justly addressed, especially by the headteacher. Pupils are given opportunities to develop their spirituality in their partnership with the local community. Year 6 in their visit to Mymms House act out the part of evacuees and spend time talking to, listening to and learning from the residents. Pupils are encouraged to be aspirational in setting positive goals for the future whilst understanding their personal responsibility for such achievements.

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

The themes for worship are linked to the programme for social and emotional learning. This provides for a good impact upon the children's spiritual, social; and emotional development. The planning for Collective Worship is thorough and benefits from collaboration between the worship co-ordinator and the local vicar. This ensures that Christian values underpin teaching and learning because teachers can reinforce what is explored in worship back in the classroom and in the playground. Following Collective Worship the vicar is able to spend time in classrooms where she answers pupils' questions and builds upon their understanding.

All the pupils enjoy worship and speak of the bible stories which help them understand how good relationships are formed and the importance of key Christian values. They particularly value the input of the vicar whose explanations and teaching are clearly understood and reflected upon by the children. The pupils clearly value opportunities to participate in Collective Worship and perceive this as a special time in the day.

Half-termly visits from the youth group, Act 4, also enhance the impact of Collective Worship through the development of current themes.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory.

The subject leader for RE has brought a good subject knowledge and vision to the development of the subject. The governors and senior management recognise the importance of religious education and ensure the provision of appropriate curriculum time and learning resources. Good quality wall displays for religious education in each classroom add to the importance and understanding of the subject within the curriculum. The attainment of the pupils is satisfactory. Tasks set do not always give pupils the opportunity to demonstrate or further their understanding of the subject matter. Marking and assessment strategies within RE are yet to be fully implemented. This, together with further work to ensure differentiation, will enhance children's attitudes, progress and engagement with the subject. A variety of teaching styles is evident in some classes, but further planned professional development and sharing of good practice will create a more stimulating learning environment throughout the school. There are good links between RE and PSHE which support pupils' moral development. Particularly impressive is the work which has

been undertaken to develop empathy in the pupils. In one lesson the pupils demonstrated a depth of spirituality in their ability to articulate and track the emotions felt by Jesus during the events leading up to the Crucifixion.

The school reflects a mainly mono-cultural population. Whilst other faiths are taught pupils are as yet unable to use their knowledge to compare different faiths.

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

The headteacher, staff and governors have worked closely and in collaboration with the local church to develop the Christian character of the school. Together they take responsibility for the development of Christian values in their pupils. It is evident from the atmosphere within the school that this has impacted upon the personal development of the pupils. There is a strong commitment on the part of the headteacher and the governors to ensure that all members of the school community are well cared for as evidenced by the involvement in the well-being project. All teaching staff willingly lead Collective Worship thus promoting a cohesive approach. The close partnership with the local church has led to increasing numbers of pupils, especially younger pupils, participating in church activities. Pupils within the school have also been involved in making Christingles which they willingly donated to the church for their service. The school stresses the importance of using the local church for the major Christian Festivals despite the distance, necessitating the use of coaches to transport the children. These events are supported by the attendance of governors and parents. The partnership between the school and the church is further developed by the contribution of the pupils to the parish magazine.