



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

**Northaw Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
Vineyards Road, Northaw, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire EN6 4PB**

Diocese of St Albans

LA:	Hertfordshire
SIAS Inspection:	27 September 2007
Previous S23 Inspection:	December 2001
URN:	117569
Headteacher:	Mr Ray Clarke
SIAS Inspector Name:	Mrs Mel Adams
SIAS Inspector No:	58

School Context

The school is a Church of England primary school, the Foundation of which is that of a community school, serving the needs of the immediate area. There is no requirement for church attendance, but preference is given to members of other churches after the village places are allocated. It is a small school with 90 pupils on role, a significant increase over the past five years. Free school meals eligibility is low. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds vary between year groups but attainment on entry is close to the national average overall.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Northaw Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are satisfactory.

The Headteacher and Governing Body are committed to the Christian values which underpin the foundation of the school, and these values steer decision making in organisational and pastoral matters. Their aspirations to further develop the school, including its distinctive Christian character, are ensuring a steady progression in the development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding of children.

Established strengths

- The commitment of the Headteacher, Vicar and Governors to the Christian foundation of the school, including developing and extending its Christian character.
- The good partnership between the church and school, and the involvement of the vicar in pastoral support, Religious Education and collective worship.

Focus for development

- To establish a clear vision for future developments to include the distinctive Christian character of the school.
- Develop a systematic evaluation process of the school as a Church school to highlight areas for improvement.
- To provide consistent opportunities in RE throughout the school for learning from religion.

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

Satisfactory overall, but with some good features, children speak with affection about their school being small but 'with a big heart'. They are able to identify aspects of particular church school experiences which they value, such as prayers at different times in the day and enjoying services at church. Overall they see it as a happy place where they feel secure, although they recognise that the behaviour of some children can, at times, affect their learning and play. They were able to identify values such as love, courage, and politeness which they see as 'helping people to be kinder'. Where there is a developing spiritual awareness, they are able to empathise with the needs of others, as when a friend is angry it may be 'because of something that has happened to them'. Achievements are regularly celebrated and success is promoted, providing a setting in which self worth can grow. A few children seem unable to take advantage of these opportunities, and for these, lack of respect and poor attitudes limit learning. Where there are conflicts, staff encourage children to apply Christian values to finding resolutions. There is some evidence around the school of the Christian character, with displays including RE in well organised classrooms. The mission statement appears in the entrance, along with information about church services and events.

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

Collective worship is planned around a range of materials including Seal materials, Bible stories and prayers and major Christian festivals, giving children an understanding of Anglican faith and practice. Good features include children behaving well and being focussed during assemblies and showing willingness to participate by answering questions and singing well. Planned to reflect Christian values, there is a weekly target such as forgiveness which is displayed in the hall and classrooms. Where this is effective, staff speak of its impact on children's behaviour and the moral choices they make. Children speak of the importance of assemblies, saying that without them, they would not know about God and Jesus. All staff participate and parents are particularly supportive of services held in church. The school enjoys weekly acts of worship in the church. The vicar takes regular assemblies, including special services in church, and his visits to the school are appreciated by children, who enjoy learning about the church as a building and how to respect God. The school has rightly identified the need to encourage the children to articulate their worship experiences, along with finding time for reflection. The vicar and governors are keen to develop a school Eucharist which would further enhance the worshipping opportunities for the school community.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory.

Children are able to engage well with learning in Religious Education when they have opportunity to relate religious ideas to their own experience, such as relating nicknames describing character to the concepts of the names and descriptions of God. Some children are able to articulate the importance of Religious Education, saying that it could be fun, learning about other languages and cooking in different cultures, but were not always able to relate the religious significance of these lessons. Some lessons are planned to include time for reflection and opportunities to learn from religion, for example including a song about the names of God, but such opportunities are not consistent throughout the school. The school's priority of assessment for learning is not yet embedded in Religious Education, and marking does not always provide feedback on religious concepts and ideas.

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

Governors, in particular the chair and Vicar, provide good support to the Headteacher and staff. The Headteacher and Governors are highly committed to promoting the Christian foundation of the school, and are beginning to identify areas, such as a school Eucharist, to further develop the Christian distinctiveness of the school. They describe how their Christian values determine their commitment to dealing with those who may be troubled, by not giving up on any child. Many parents support these values. Staff are also fully aware and supportive of the Christian foundation. Effective links exist between the school and the church, who support each other with fund raising, and the PCC will support the school financially. Development planning for RE and Collective worship has identified areas for development, but these are not sufficiently focussed on the impact on children's learning and experiences. Monitoring and evaluation of the school as a Church school are in the early stages and have not yet begun to impact on developments. The Headteacher and Governors are committed to developing structures to enable this to happen. A recent governing body meeting has identified the need for a long term, strategic vision for the school.