



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Studham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Lower School
Church Road, Studham, Dunstable LU6 2QD

Diocese of St Albans

LEA: Bedfordshire
SIAS Inspection : 9th July 2007
Previous S23 Inspection: 2002
URN: 109607
Headteacher: Delene Johnson
SIAS Inspector : Alan Thornsby 137

Context

Studham Lower school is a small school serving the villages of Studham and Whipsnade. Most children are from White British backgrounds and begin school having experienced pre-school education. The school is facing a period of settled staffing after significant changes.

Overall distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a Church of England School is satisfactory.

Studham Lower school is a satisfactory school because of the quality of care and sense of community it gives to its pupils. A stronger awareness of its church foundation is emerging.

Established strengths

- The ethos of care and respect that are essential elements of pupils' personal development
- The links with local churches and neighbouring school that ensure the school has an active role within the community.
- The value pupils place on prayer

Focus for development

- To explore the distinctiveness of the school as a church school to inform the school development plan and find creative ways to express this in school.
- To develop pupil involvement in worship
- To develop pupils awareness of their role in a multi-cultural society.

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

This small school is central to its rural community. This means that everyone in the community is known to each other and this is reflected in the strong emphasis placed on care and respect for all. Parents are very positive about the care the school has for all its pupils, which they see to be rooted in Christian values. As one pupils described, 'We have a buddy stop in the yard, but we are all buddies and help when someone needs it.' This strengthens the friendship bonds between pupils of different ages in this small school and contributes to the safe and secure learning environment. All pupils are valued and supported to achieve academically and personally by high expectations of behaviour and a range of incentives and tracking systems. Children make good progress in spiritual, moral and social developments because of the links made between worship, religious education and other areas of the curriculum. The school has, however, identified the need to raise the profile of multi-cultural awareness in order to prepare pupils for life in a multicultural society. The good relationships between all members of the community reflect values that are Christian. Their Christian basis however is not effectively explored. This limits the impact of the school's church foundation.

The impact of worship is satisfactory.

Worship is an important time of the day when the whole school meets together for a time of reflection. The present themes are limited to Bible stories but do increase pupils' knowledge and understanding of the Bible and explore its relevance to everyday life. The school adapts its planning to recognise and celebrate events in school. Thus the story of Gideon was dramatised to show the bravery and willingness of a child who took part in a dance display at the last minute at the local village fete. Children respond well to the reverent atmosphere made by the quiet entry to suitable music and use of the greeting. Prayer has a high profile in school and all face a large wooden cross when offering prayer. This is situated behind a table with prayer books and baskets where pupils leave prayers that are used as part of Friday celebration assembly. Children are aware that the cloth draped over the table 'changes with the seasons of the church'. They describe prayer as being 'a time to talk to God', and of worship as 'a time to explore Bible stories and learn about God'. Pupils' experience is widened because worship is lead by the vicar from St Mary's as well as the Methodist minister. Pupils make contributions to worship though willing responses to questions and taking part in role-play. The school has rightly identified however, through self-evaluation, the need for greater pupil involvement in worship as part of placing a greater emphasis on celebration of the Church calendar.

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

The vision of the head for a happy school is encompassed in the school motto jointly created by staff and pupils 'Caring to learn; Learning to care'. This is seen in the relationships between all members of the school community in their lives. There has been some evaluation of the distinctive Christian character of the school that has resulted, for example, in governors' meetings beginning with a prayer. The school has identified the need to address further this issue and raise the profile of distinctiveness. After a period of unsettled staffing the school is now entering a phase ready to develop and move forward, and has the capacity to do so. There are very effective links with local churches and a neighbouring school that enable the school to have a high profile role in community events, such as local fetes, the Studham Ball and church festivals.