



## Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

**Bishop Wood Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior School  
Frogmore Street, Tring HP23 3AU**

**Diocese of St Albans**

**LA:** Hertfordshire  
**SIAS Inspection:** 5<sup>th</sup> November 2008  
**Previous S23 Inspection:** 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> May 2004  
**URN:** 117458  
**Headteacher:** Mrs Linda Hardman  
**SIAS Inspector Name:** Revd Vanessa G Cato  
**SIAS Inspector No:**

### School Context

Bishop Wood is an average-sized Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior School in a 1960s building, close to the church, in the small market town of Tring. Most pupils are white-British. A very low number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Although there is a higher than average number of pupils with a statement of special educational need, the number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is low.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bishop Wood School as a Church of England school are good.

Bishop Wood School is rooted in Christian faith and practice, with a strong commitment by the Headteacher, staff and governors to the Christian ethos and the development and exploration of faith. This is given practical and prayerful support by the parish Church. Care, compassion and respect are evident and commented upon as strengths of the school by pupils, parents, staff and governors. RE and Worship have prominence in the school.

### Established strengths

- Committed Headteacher, governors and leadership team give a strong Christian ethos, which underpins the life of the school.
- RE and Collective Worship are given a high profile and priority.
- The Christian nature of the school is notably worked out in respectful, caring and compassionate relationships, resulting in a "close-knit, happy and truly caring place" (*Ofsted 2008*).

### Focus for development

- Put in place an effective system for recording and evaluating Collective Worship.
- Raise the standard of teachers' critical evaluation of their R.E. lessons in order to better eliminate weaknesses and raise standards of teaching.
- Continue to develop the spiritual aspect across the whole curriculum.
- Continue to develop and strengthen links with the parish church.

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

Christian values are both explicit and implicit at Bishop Wood School and evidenced in a strong commitment to the personal development and welfare of pupils and staff. The children understand these qualities, and suggest the school's Christian values have led to a very low level of bullying and infrequent need for the trained peer mediators. Both children and adults feel valued. Christian pupils and staff feel comfortable speaking about their faith within the school community. The spiritual and moral aspects of the curriculum underpin the ethos of the school. Some of the recently introduced prayer corners in the classrooms invite wonder and reflection. Some children are not aware of them, others have found them helpful. Prayers in class before lunch and at the end of school often use the children's own prayers. Governors' meetings include a time of prayer and most weeks a governor will join the school for worship. Good provision is made for extra-curricular activities including music, sport and art. Other faiths and cultures are respected and taught alongside Christianity and there is a focus on shared values and practice as well as the rich diversity.

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

Collective Worship is an essential part of the school day, with all teachers, support staff and pupils usually present. There are strong and attractive focal points. Seating arrangements give a sense of community. The worship observed made good use of the digital projector to illustrate the talk, though projected "learning intentions" detracted from the sense of worship. Although children were used in the presentation, School Council members felt there was not enough pupil involvement or interaction. However, the general view of Collective Worship is positive. Children particularly like the inclusion of drama, "music assemblies" and visitors. Visitors include leaders from other denominations and parents. Some of their talks have made particular impact. Teachers also lead worship and there is regular class-led worship. The Rector leads school worship twice a month, one of these in the parish church. Major festivals and the year end service also take place in church. Some parents feel their children's faith has developed or grown through being at the school. However, the lack of consistent and regular monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship needs to be addressed if the school is to achieve the high standard of worship to which it is committed.

**The effectiveness of the religious education is good.**

RE is given a high priority and has an equal budget with other subjects. RE specialists come in one day a week, giving each class an hour's lesson. The syllabus follows the Hertfordshire scheme with a strong emphasis on Christianity. This is used as a baseline for exploring other faiths. Lesson plans and observation show evidence of differentiation in the tasks set. Children comment favourably on RE lessons which they generally find interesting. They "enjoy learning about other religions" and "finding out more about God and Jesus". Lessons observed ranged from weak to excellent. Enthusiasm and good knowledge in the latter inspired enthusiasm and good responses in the pupils. There was less confidence in subject matter in the other lessons and poor management prevented full development in the weak lesson. The teachers' quality of self-evaluation is reflected in the quality of their lessons and the standards of work produced. This is an area for development. The Headteacher monitors RE well, writing clear and useful feedback.

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

The Headteacher and the senior management team are committed to the Christian ethos of the school and the welfare of pupils and staff. Examples of this are the high profile given to RE and worship, "Golden Time" for pupils and "Flyaway Fridays" for staff. Parents generally have a positive view of the leadership and the effect on the pupils of the school as a Church school. Parents and pupils feel their concerns are heard. One parent expressed particular gratitude for help given in a time of family difficulties. Good links have been made with the parish church, the local community and other denominations. Attendance at courses by both staff and governors are encouraged. Diocesan courses are also attended. The exemplary commitment to ethos and care has, however, tended to eclipse the need for a more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of standards.