



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report



Kensworth VC Lower School
Common Road, Kensworth, Dunstable LU6 3RH

Diocese of St Albans

LA: Central Bedfordshire:
SIAS Inspection: 9 July 2010
Previous S48 Inspection: 9 May 2007
URN: 109602
Headteacher: Mrs Anna Kentish
SIAS Inspector Name: David Morton
SIAS Inspector No: 515

School Context

Kensworth VC Lower School is a small school in rural Bedfordshire with 59 pupils on roll. It is set in pleasant grounds, with a mixture of new and older buildings. It has fewer pupils with learning difficulties than average and most pupils are of White British heritage. Pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The school places a strong emphasis on the creative curriculum.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Kensworth VC Lower School as a Church of England School is good.

Working in partnership with the local community Kensworth VC Lower School offers pupils a good education in an environment characterised by the Christian values of care, love, forgiveness and compassion.

Established strengths

- The clearly visible and distinct Christian ethos of the school that is recognised and valued by the local community
- The quality of the pastoral care offered by the school, the parish rector and its foundation governors
- The clear vision the Head teacher has for the development of Kensworth VC Lower school as a church school.
- The strong reciprocal relationship that exists between the school, local churches and the wider village community

Focus for development

- Ensure that evaluations of the impact of collective worship on the whole school community are effectively undertaken, recorded and reported
- Develop effective mechanisms for monitoring, recording and evaluating the effectiveness of the school as a church school
- Create a specific strand within the School Development Plan to identify and implement agreed areas for development

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

Kensworth VC Lower School has a clearly visible and distinct Christian Ethos that is recognised and valued by the local community. Characterised by the values of care, love, forgiveness and compassion, the school's Christian ethos significantly impacts on the quality of relationships at all levels of school life. Engagement with the community is good. This is truly a community school. Parents choose to send their children to this school because of its welcoming, inclusive atmosphere. They fully support the way children are encouraged to engage with the beliefs and practices of Christianity and the other major world religions in an open, reflective manner. Pupils feel safe and valued in school. Their behaviour is good and reflects the Christian values of the school. One pupil commented, "I like this school because when I am sad some one always comes to play with me". Pupils are treated with respect and are encouraged to share how they feel with staff and each other. The schools 'worry corner' provides a good example of how children are cared for as part of the school community. Pupils' spiritual development is also good. High quality displays provide numerous opportunities for them to reflect on life in other parts of the world. Care and concern for others is encouraged as a natural part of daily school life. Pupils regularly raise money for charity by organising and participating in local charitable concerts and events such as the local 'cancer walk' The schools distinctive Christian character is nurtured and supported by an active group of foundation governors that includes the parish rector. Her involvement, encouragement and pastoral support is good and has led to a steady, continuous growth in the impact that the school's distinctive character is having across the local community. This is evidenced by the quality of the pastoral care offered by the school and its foundation governors which is drawing school families into the life of the local parish church.

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

Collective Worship acts as a focal point for the school community, reinforcing and celebrating its Christian ethos. Acts of worship are well planned and are based on a series of Christian values. Care is taken to ensure that pupils experience a wide range of worship styles including those that follow traditional Anglican practice. Use of drama, prayer, story, singing and periods of silence promote an environment where children can reflect and grow spiritually. This is good practice. The school welcomes visitors into school and collective worship is taken regularly by the parish Rector and by other visiting clergy. This approach is good because it provides pupils with a breadth and depth of experience and further deepens links with the local community. Pupils' participation in collective worship is also good. A worshipful atmosphere is created at the start of acts of worship by using reflective music. A strong focal point for worship is provided by a coloured patchwork backdrop and a large cross. Pupils' singing is joyful and they listen with attention. Events such as awards presentations are sensitively included into acts of worship and each is clearly demarcated from the other. The use of a school prayer is effective in communicating and embedding the school's vision and ethos into the worshipping life of the school. Self evaluation of collective worship is only just developing and is satisfactory. The current system, whilst working effectively, collects limited information on the impact that collective worship has on the school community and does not yet involve pupils. Foundation governors observe collective worship 4 – 6 times a year but these visits are not recorded or reported to the governing body as a whole. This is an area for development.

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

The Head teacher has a clear vision for the development of Kensworth VC Lower School as a church school, based on the values of care, love, forgiveness and compassion. Her drive and desire to see the school improve has led to a series of initiatives that have enhanced the school building, its curriculum, and ethos. These have led to developments in pupils' spiritual development, their ability to care for one another and their capacity to reflect on their own beliefs and the beliefs of others. The partnership between the school and the local community is excellent. Over the past three years the school has steadily become more involved in local community activities. Pupils now participate in local church festivals, charity events and significant anniversaries including the recent 200th anniversary of the local Methodist chapel. The development of a purpose built pre-school facility, strongly supported by the school's foundation governors, has provided a valuable service to local families and has led to a significant increase in children from the local community attending school. This is to be commended. The involvement of foundation governors in putting the school's ethos into practice is also good. They visit the school each week participating in a wide range of activities and events. Providing a natural link between the school and the local parish their continuity of service has enabled the school to grow and develop as a Christian community since the last Section 48 Inspection. However, the strategic involvement of foundation governors in the growth of the school as a church school is only satisfactory and remains an area for development. This is largely due to their wholehearted desire to see the school embedded into the life of the local community and their practical involvement in this process. In preparing for the challenges of recruiting future school leaders and governors, the governing body should develop simple, yet effective, mechanisms for monitoring, recording and evaluating the development of the school as a church school. They should also work with the Head teacher to identify priorities for inclusion within the school development plan.