

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

All Saints Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Yeovil Road
Montacute
Somerset
TA15 6XG

Diocese: Bath and Wells

Local authority: Somerset County
Dates of inspection: July 3rd 2012
Date of last inspection: 16th September 2008
School's unique reference number: 131010
Headteacher: Paula Park
Inspector's name and number: Sandra Symonds 109

School context

All Saints Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is an average sized rural school of 211 pupils arranged into 7 class groups. The majority of the pupils are of white British heritage and those known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school serves the united benefice of Brympton, Montacute, Odcombe and Lufton. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and or disabilities is below average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of All Saints Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

All Saints Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is an outstanding church school where the children feel very valued and special. It is distinctive and effective in its practice. At its core is a Christian ethos which permeates school life and is reflected in children's attitudes to each other and the sense of caring and commitment that runs through the whole community.

Established strengths

- Relationships within the whole school community which are exemplary
- The strong Christian leadership of the school by a firmly committed head teacher
- The strong links with the parish church and the local community

Focus for development

- To review the mission statement making it more accessible to all stakeholders.
- To further develop the assessment of Religious Education (RE) to include assessment for learning with a particular focus on AT 2
- To involve parents in the evaluation of the school as a church school.

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

The children clearly identify the values of respect and caring for one another, trying their best and working together as important aspects of life in school. They have a good understanding that the foundation of these values is to be found in the Bible and the teachings of Jesus. The living out of these values is reflected in the quality of relationships throughout the school community which are excellent. For example children look after each other regardless of age and there is a high level of respect between adults and children. This has created an environment in which children talk openly and with confidence about their views and opinions knowing they will be valued and acted upon. Adults in the school are good role models for these values and the children know they can turn to them for help and support. The development of the children's spiritual awareness is excellent and includes reflection time during daily worship, prayer areas in each classroom and spontaneous opportunities within

the learning experience. Since the last SIAS inspection the school has developed a sensory, spiritual garden used by the children for quiet reflection and prayer. Pupils enjoy coming to school and have very positive attitudes towards all aspects of school life including their learning. One child expressed this by saying "Everyone works hard and they are all good" and another "It helps us to think more and stretch our brains". Children successfully take on responsibilities such as buddies for the reception children, school council, year 6 leading clubs for the younger children at lunchtime, librarians and eco club representatives. Parents see the Christian ethos as a strength of the school. One parent commented. "There is a wholeness, a roundness, an emotional stability, an awareness of something bigger than you that the school generates". The school environment enhances the Christian character of the school with an area of worship in each classroom displaying prayers written by the children. These areas are often used by the children to pray spontaneously. Among other artefacts there is a kindness tree in the front entrance hall where children have written messages showing other children's kindness to them - for example "Thank you for being kind when I was feeling upset and lonely". There is also an RE focused display linked to aspects the children are currently studying. On the day of the inspection it was about parables and the thought for the moment was "Always follow God even when times are tough". The pupils were very aware of this, one saying "If you are really worried you just ask for God's help". There are many extra-curricular activities for the pupils to engage with, including for example a young engineering club, and advice and support is available for all children and includes a parent support worker who is there to support parents in times of difficulty.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The learners clearly articulate the importance of worship and the key Christian values it promotes. It is outstanding because of the impact it makes on the lives of the children and the wider school community. During the inspection, pupils remembered many acts of worship they had experienced and were able to talk about changes these had made to the way they lived their lives. For example one pupil talked about how today's worship had taught her that if you are still and quiet you will be filled with the spirit and another mentioned how the words of the hymns had given her peace. Pupils enjoy worship and clearly see it as an important aspect of school life, influencing much of the behaviour and attitudes of the learners. Acts of worship are well planned and recorded by the head teacher and the local incumbent and SEAL topics and key festivals are successfully integrated into the themes. All members of staff lead worship within the school and also attend worship with the children. The vicar leads worship half termly and various visitors come in on a regular basis which helps to ensure the pupils experience a range of worship that reflects the breadth of the Anglican tradition, and gives them experience of various worship styles and traditions. Worship takes place in the local church on a regular basis and is led by the local incumbent. The worship observed was outstanding. The atmosphere created by year 6 singing as the school entered the hall was both spiritual and worshipful. The whole school was involved during the telling of the story and all the children were fully focused and engaged throughout the session. The singing was deeply moving and involved all members of the school. Worship is consistently and recognisably Christian and imaginatively presented. Governors, staff and children are all involved in evaluation of collective worship and this evaluation has led to several changes, for example the school is considering separate key stage worship because of suggestions from the pupils. Parents attend the 'Praise assembly' each week and are invited to the worship held in the church celebrating the festivals. They mentioned how the prayer life of the school had influenced their children. Prayer is a very important part of worship and school life and the children's understanding of it is good. They know that prayer is about talking to God and say that praying helps in difficult situations. "You can tell Him what you really feel in prayer" one child said, and another "It's about feeling His love". There are prayer boxes around the school used frequently by the children.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious Education is well planned, and effective teaching and learning ensures that standards of achievement are broadly in line with the national expectations and children make expected progress. The quality of teaching observed was good with clear learning objectives shared with the children. In the lessons observed the children were able to talk

openly about what they had been taught. For example one key stage one class was following a topic on special places. They had visited the local church during the previous week and the teacher was reviewing their previous learning. In answer to the question "How does the church help us?" one child responded that it helped her to feel closer to God. Clearly pupils enjoy RE and are able to see the relevance it has to their own lives. They say they like RE because the teachers make it interesting and it is an important subject because Jesus is special. Teachers employ a variety of teaching methods and effective questioning. The school has recently established a system of assessment and now needs to develop this to include learner's own assessment with their next steps for learning made clear to them. The subject makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. The Key Stage 2 lesson observed focused on the children thinking about what Zaccheus might have discovered from his relationships with others and what they could learn from this. Several of them had thought this through and were clearly bringing these concepts into their own lives. The school follows the Diocesan guidelines which reflect the school's Christian foundation and at the same time gives opportunities to explore other faiths and cultures. One child mentioned how learning about different religions helped him to understand other people better and how much he enjoyed this learning. The RE coordinator was on maternity leave at the time of the inspection and the head teacher has taken over the role temporarily. It was clear that both had a very good grasp of the subject and that resources were good.

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

The leadership of the head teacher contributes significantly to the success of All Saints as a church school. She has an excellent understanding of her local community and demonstrates a clear vision and high expectations based firmly on Christian values. This vision is fully supported by her governing body and her staff team. As a result the children behave and work well and enjoy coming to school. This aspect of school is communicated well to parents who fully support its ethos. The local incumbent is an ex-officio member of the governing body and maintains excellent links with the school. The foundation governors meet annually with the head teacher, the RE coordinator and the clergy to evaluate the Church School foundation, and the curriculum committee review sections of the self-evaluation Toolkit on a regular basis. The school has an ethos/mission statement which was developed by the whole community some time ago. The school now needs to revisit the Mission statement and involve all stakeholders in the process, embedding it further into the school culture. There are excellent links with the local church and the community. A member of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) is also a foundation governor and reports back at each meeting. The school, the church and the community work very well together - as one parent said "It's like they are one". There is a deep sense of mutual ownership between the church, the school and the village community and both the local community and the church hold the school in high regard. There are many areas where they work together and one of the most recent has been the Jubilee party held in the school. During the past two years the school has held a multicultural week, developed an Easter experience and displayed work in the church to help the community to understand the life of the school better. The school has over the last two years successfully established links with a school from London, meeting for the first time at Stonehenge.