

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Andrew's Church of England Infant School

High Street
Great Linford
Milton Keynes
MK14 5AX

Diocese: Oxford
Local authority: Milton Keynes
Dates of inspection: 29th September 2011
Date of last inspection: 4th December 2007
School's unique reference number: 110443
Headteacher: Anne Shedden
Inspector's name and number: Ian Lewis 629

School context

St Andrew's is a very small infant school situated in the village of Great Linford on the edge of Milton Keynes. Since February 2011 it has been in a federated partnership with Sherington CE Infant School, the head teacher leading both. It enjoys a very strong and mutually beneficial relationship with the local community and in particular the parish church and its clergy. Prior to this inspection the head teacher has been absent on long-term leave due to illness and has only recently returned, the school being very well managed in her absence by the assistant head.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Andrew's as a Church of England school are good

The strong and vibrant Christian ethos which is at the heart of the school's life has been developed through the clear-sighted leadership of the head teacher working in close partnership with a dedicated team of staff and governors. The Christian values on which the school's vision is built are clearly understood and exemplified by all in its community, the children and staff strongly demonstrating care and support for one another and for the world around them.

Established strengths

- Very strong Christian values which are reflected in the excellent behaviour and mutual support of the children.
- Strong and effective leadership by the head teacher working in close partnership with a highly committed governing body and staff.
- Extremely enthusiastic and supportive parents.
- A strong partnership with the parish church and local community.

Focus for development

- Urgently develop formal mechanisms to involve all stakeholders in monitoring and evaluating the impact of the school's distinctiveness as a church school.
- Develop systems for the formal monitoring and evaluation of worship to inform development planning.
- Develop opportunities for pupils to plan and lead worship.

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

St Andrew's school has established as the basis for its daily life very firm and distinctly Christian values. These have a clear impact on the whole school community, evidenced in the extremely good behaviour of the children who show great care and respect for all others in the school and in the wider community. This is spoken of very warmly by parents who describe behaviour as "exceptionally good". They go on to stress that there is no bullying and that staff deal with any problems brought to them by the children quickly and effectively. Evidence obtained through observation and discussion with the children shows that they are very happy at school. Parents corroborate this saying, "The children can't wait to come back to school from their holidays!" Staff clearly exemplify the school's values, demonstrating great love and care for all. Discussion with the children gives clear evidence that they are confident that they are valued as individuals and that they have a voice in the school community, their views being taken into account. This is emphatically confirmed by parents in the course of discussion who also stress that the children are extremely proud of belonging to the school "family". The spiritual development of the pupils is very well supported through periods of reflection and prayer throughout the school day. Discussion with the children

gives clear evidence that they recognise and have a growing understanding of the importance of these times, observation showing that they also treat them with quiet reverence. Spiritual development is also well supported through the school environment. Quiet areas for thought and reflection are provided such as the "reflection table" in the worship area and suitable spaces in the attractive outside area. Discussion with pupils and staff confirm that these areas are used regularly and effectively by the children, typical comments by the pupils being, "I love the quiet times – we get to think and concentrate" and "I like saying prayers in the quiet times". Pupils are encouraged to appreciate the wonders of the natural world through frequent visits to the forest school and local parkland. Within the school grounds they observe the wonder of growing things through the school garden where they grow vegetables which are subsequently sold locally. Spiritual development is further enhanced through an excellent working partnership with the parish church, evidenced through the active involvement of the vicar in school life. Evidence obtained through discussion with pupils, parents and staff confirms that through links with a local hospice and a care home, the children are developing a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities as citizens within the local and wider communities. The pupils also regularly support a number of charities. The school is currently developing links with a church school in Sierra Leone in order to extend the pupils' understanding of their roles within the global community.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Evidence from observation together with discussion with pupils, staff, parents and governors shows that worship occupies an extremely important place in the school's daily life, affirming and strengthening its distinctly Christian values. The pupils thoroughly enjoy worship, enthusiastically taking an active part within it. This was clearly evidenced in the whole school act of worship observed in which there was a true feeling of reverence together with the pupils' consistent absorption and engagement. They demonstrated an excellent prior knowledge through their confident answers to questions and they sang with evident enjoyment and enthusiasm. All staff attend worship and through discussion and observation it is evident that all in the school derive personal inspiration from it. Parents speak very warmly of the children's enthusiasm for worship and say that they often independently follow-up the themes at home. However, pupils do not at the present time have opportunities to plan and lead worship themselves. The school is aware of this and has identified it as an item for development within its self-evaluation. Worship is well planned in the long and short term using the agreed syllabus for Milton Keynes together with the school's Christian values and the festivals of the major faiths. The moral and social content of worship clearly ensures that all in the school's community, regardless of faith, are wholly included. Staff and governors informally evaluate worship and subsequently report to the governing body. The views of pupils and parents regarding worship are also asked for and taken into account. However, there is insufficient formal monitoring and evaluation to inform future planning, including the school's development plan and its subsequent budgeting requirements. In response to the previous inspection, the school has enriched its resources to support both worship and RE. Through the school's excellent links with the parish church, which the children visit regularly for both worship and the curriculum, together with the very close involvement of the vicar in school life, pupils are developing their understanding of Anglican faith, tradition and practice.

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

The strong and effective leadership of the head teacher working in close partnership with a highly committed team of staff and governors has developed a clear vision for the school founded on firm Christian values. Discussion with stakeholders gives clear evidence that the school's distinctiveness is recognised and valued within the local community, the impact evidenced by a waiting list of children to enter the school and glowing praise from parents of existing pupils. "Getting a child in this school is the best thing in the world to happen!" is a typical comment. The Christian values at the heart of the school are exemplified in the excellent behaviour of the children and the love and care shown to all by the staff. Parents say that they feel well informed about school matters. Their views and those of the children are sought for the purpose of informing future development but this is very much on an informal basis. There is insufficient formal evaluation by all stakeholders on matters pertaining to the school's distinctiveness as a church school. However, this has been recognised in the school's thorough and accurate self-evaluation as a focus for development. The school has forged excellent and mutually beneficial links with the wider community, particularly with the parish church and, through its clearly Christian life, is viewed as a mainstay of the village and its surrounding area.