



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Bishop Bronescombe Church of England VA Primary School, 84 Boscoppa Road, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 3DT.

Diocese: Truro

Local authority: Cornwall

Date of inspection: July 2nd 2008

Date of last inspection: 7th & 9th June 2004

School's unique reference number: 112005

Headteacher: Mr. Adrian Massey

Inspector's name and number: Mrs. Jenny Pestridge (153)

School context

This is the only Church school in the Deanery and is situated on the outskirts of St Austell. The 292 learners attend from a wide area and there is a high mobility rate. The local parish Church meets in the school on Sundays.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bishop Bronescombe Church of England VA Primary School, as a Church of England school, are good.

The school has a vibrant Christian identity because of strong leadership. This is supported by creative teaching, which emphasises education from a Christian worldview. There are some aspects of the school that are outstanding. These reflect the commitment of the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher in developing the school's Christian ethos. The school is providing learners with an experience of what it means to be part of a worshipping community. The partnership with the new parish priest is enriching the school community.

Established strengths

- The commitment, vision and leadership of the Headteacher, supported by staff and governors, to developing the Christian ethos of the school.
- The quality of creative teaching and learning in religious education, in both Key Stages.
- The enthusiasm of the new parish priest for developing the partnership between the school and the Church.

Focus for development

- Create a policy for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Involve all learners in a review of daily collective worship and the twice-termly service of Eucharist. Focus on the length and accessibility of the Eucharist for the wide age range.
- Develop, monitor and evaluate the continuity and progression of faiths other than Christianity, across the Key Stages.
- Develop links with the wider Christian community in religious education and collective worship.

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

Learners and their parents are proud of the school because all learners are making progress. They enjoy the challenge provided in their lessons. This is due to the emphasis on creative teaching strategies, in an atmosphere of care and high expectations. Parents refer to the care with which individual concerns are dealt with by the Headteacher, and all the staff, including learning support assistants. One parent described the school as, "a very peaceful, loving place." Another parent said, "in an ideal world, every school would be like this one." The Headteacher and staff provide excellent role models that reflect Christianity as a way of life. "For the majority of children in the school, this is Church." This statement by a parent describes the school's approach to its Church of England foundation. Because of this approach, education is from a Christian worldview. This is seen, for example, in a topic involving care and responsibility for the environment. It challenges learners to consider God's creation versus man's destruction. The school's outstanding art gallery makes reference to God as creator through artwork on the elements of earth, air, fire and water. As a result, learners are given an explicitly Christian context for learning and response. One of the school's main expressions of Christian spiritual development is through the allocation of a specific Bible story to each class. This means that the learners know each story in depth. Because of this, learners are able to make comparisons between the stories and key life issues, emphasising the relevance of the Bible. The ethos of the school is reflected in the quality of the relationships between staff, and between staff and learners. This is expressed, for example, through an emphasis on challenge and affirmation in lessons. There is also a creative approach to curriculum planning, which is resulting in an outstanding level of enjoyment and learning. As a result, both staff and learners are benefiting from variety and fresh stimulus. The classrooms and public areas reflect an outstanding level of artwork, and an emphasis on creativity. Cross-curricular topics involving art as an expression of knowledge and response are outstanding. The effective and enthusiastic school council participate in decision-making. This mature and articulate team reflect the excellent tutoring and high expectations of the staff.

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

Collective worship is benefiting from a review, which resulted in a two-year rolling programme. The overall, long term planning involves all the learners. This excellent, inclusive approach means that worship reflects the current concerns and interests of the learners. The recent development of linking these themes to Christian concepts reflects good management. An evaluation diary is completed by individual learners, which means that the school is creating a challenging and questioning approach. This does not currently extend to involving all the learners in an overall evaluation of collective worship, including the twice-termly service of Eucharist. The act of worship observed, led by the parish priest, reflected his enthusiasm for making relevant links between Bible stories and everyday life. Learners participated in singing as classes entered, in the readings and prayers, including singing the Lord's Prayer. These features reflect the learners' good level of knowledge and understanding of Anglican practice. The regular presence of a foundation governor at acts of worship emphasises commitment and support to the Christian character of the school. The positive support given to collective worship and the learners by the parish priest and foundation governor, does not currently fully extend to the worshipping congregation.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

The subject is managed by the Deputy Headteacher with rigour and enthusiasm, which is reflected in the high standard of learners' written work. This is consistent across the Key Stages. Learners are being given opportunities to write for different audiences, such as letters and diaries. The quality of marking and assessment means that learners are aware of how to make progress in their work. The quality of teaching in both Key Stages is never less than good, with examples of outstanding practice. As a result, learners enjoy religious education and their behaviour is excellent. Creative teaching, with challenging questions, is resulting in higher-level thinking. The current use of a philosophical approach to religion in

Key Stage 2, means that learners are developing an understanding of the part played by faith in the lives of significant people. The quality of the resulting written work is an indication of the impact of this approach. In Key Stage 1, learners are able to relate the story of Jonah, with an attention to detail, meaning and application. The emphasis on learning about and learning from Bible stories means that religious education permeates the curriculum. Other creative initiatives undertaken by the school, particularly "Walking the Saints Way", are enabling learners to experience significant moments for Christians. Experiential teaching, such as observed in a Key Stage 2 class, means that learners are being given opportunities to resolve conflict, in a Christian context. The use of quiet reflection, a meditative atmosphere and key questions, enabled learners to apply their learning to their own situations. Currently, the inclusion and development of faiths other than Christianity, does not reflect continuity and progression across the Key Stages. The contribution made by the parish priest to the religious education curriculum represents good practice.

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

The commitment of the Headteacher to the definition of the school as a worshipping community is outstanding. Enthusiastic teachers and learning support assistants support him in this vision. The quality of the senior leadership team means that the Christian ethos underpins the whole life of the school. This is borne out by the outstanding praise of the parents, and also in a testimonial from a Year 6 leaver. She says of the Headteacher and staff, "You have helped and understood all of my problems and you let me trust you." The new parish priest and foundation governors are fully committed to the Church / school partnership. This is resulting in a commitment shared with the school, to serve the local and wider community. However, the relationship between the school and the Church community is not currently reaching its full potential. This means that the possibility of the learners benefiting from the Church being based in the school is not being realised.

SIAS report – July 2008 - Bishop Bronescombe Church of England VA Primary School,
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