

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Charlton Horethorne Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Charlton Horethorne,
Sherborne
DT9 4NL

Diocese: Bath & Wells

Local authority: Somerset

Dates of inspection: 13 November 2008

Date of last inspection: 7, 13 & 14 September 2004

School's unique reference number: 123901

Headteacher: Mrs J Shaw

Inspector's name and number: Sandra Symonds - 109

School context

Charlton Horethorne Church of England VA School is a village school with 53 pupils educated in 3 classes. The school's catchment area covers the parishes of Charlton Horethorne, Holton, Blackford, Milborne Wick, Stowell and Sigwells although about 50% of the learners come from out of the catchment area. The original school building dates from 1887 with further additions in 1999 and 2000.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Charlton Horethorne Church of England V.A. Primary school as a Church of England school are good

Charlton Horethorne Church of England Primary school is a good church school where the majority of learners feel valued and special. It is distinctive and effective in its practice. At its core is its Christian ethos which permeates school life and is reflected in the pupils' attitudes to each other and the sense of caring and support that runs through the school.

Established strengths

- The distinctive Christian ethos of the school which has a positive impact on the learners perception of themselves and the world around them
- Christian values which help all children to feel valued and special.
- The strong sense of community felt by the parent body and led by the head teacher and the local incumbent.

Focus for development

- Establish assessment in Religious Education to ensure progression.
- Involve the governing body in monitoring Religious Education and church school distinctiveness
- Differentiate activities in Religious Education across the school, to meet the needs of all learners

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good in the way it meets the needs of all learners

The school's distinctive Christian character is good and is reflected in the values held by the stakeholders. One learner stated "The Bible tells us what to do and what not to do" The school has a good working atmosphere and relationships are based on the Christian values of care and concern for others. Learners from all groups feel valued and special and this raises their self esteem and levels of independence. The school has high expectations of behaviour and encourages learners to be kind and considerate. They are able to communicate their beliefs well, and when asked about forgiveness one learner quoted correctly this element in the Lord's Prayer and its meaning. The school has recently written a policy for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of its learning to provide further

opportunities for the children. The 'Learner's Expectations', clearly displayed and understood by the pupils include one about respect and care for each other. Parents recognise the school's distinctiveness and feel it is a strength of the school. They were able to give many instances of how the school's Christian values had impacted on their children. One parent mentioned how her child had begun to ask challenging questions about God (e.g. Does God have an impact on what we are thinking?), and another parent felt the Christian values shown by the school had changed her child's perception of himself and he had altered from being incredibly shy to being a very confident boy. There were a number of areas of display around the school proclaiming the church school distinctiveness but this is not reflected in most of the documentation.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Learners enjoy worship and can clearly articulate its importance to their lives and the life of the school. On the day of the inspection they gave many examples of how collective worship had helped them to change the way they thought or behaved. For example one pupil mentioned a worship that was focused on new beginnings meant that "you can change things at any time and make them better because God always forgives you." Worship is well planned through termly themes and imaginatively presented. The local incumbent leads one act of collective worship each week with the staff leading on other days. The coordinator has developed a good system for recording and evaluating worship which has helped to change aspects for the better. To develop this children could be included in the evaluation. Worship is held in the church building at the end of each term and for several Festivals during the year which contributes well to their understanding of Anglican practice.

The participants behave well and the worship takes place in an atmosphere of calm and respect. Parents spoke about the challenging questions they were often presented with following some acts of worship, and some were present at the worship observed.

The effectiveness of the Religious Education is good

Religious Education is taught according to the agreed syllabus and makes a contribution to their spiritual development. For example the planning mentions stilling being used in one lesson. The majority of learners achieve the expectations for their age. The coordinator is currently reviewing the assessment procedures in order that progress in RE will improve. Learners speak confidently about the contribution R.E makes to their understanding of the world in which they live. They demonstrate good knowledge and insight into a number of bible stories and are able to talk about faiths other than Christianity. Lessons observed were good with outstanding features, including clear learning objectives, interesting artefacts, differentiated work and varied approaches to learning. Pupils were all on task and were able to talk about their knowledge and understanding. However the scrutiny of work revealed the need to develop differentiation across the whole school in order that the more able are challenged and the less able are developed. The subject co coordinator has undertaken training and devolved this to other members of staff to ensure higher standards of teaching and learning across the school.

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

The head teacher and leadership team contribute significantly to Charlton Horthorne's success as a church school. They have a good understanding of their local community and demonstrate a clear vision and high expectations based on Christian values. As a result the learners work and behave well and enjoy coming to school. This vision is communicated well to the rest of the staff, parents and community. Foundation governors support the headteacher, but also need to challenge, as part of their monitoring of the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school. Parents and learners speak positively about the way in which the school seeks and values their views, and teachers and support staff feel valued as members of the staff team. They are encouraging of Charlton Horethorne's role as a Christian community and appreciative of the positive impact this has on the lives of the children.