

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Church of the Ascension Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

**New Street, Wall Heath, Kingswinford, West Midlands.**

**DY6 9AH.**

**Diocese: Worcester**

Local authority: Dudley

Dates of inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> September 2007.

Date of last inspection: 21<sup>st</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1997

School's unique reference number: 103835

Headteacher: Mr Richard Green

Inspector's name and number: Janet Nesbitt 75

#### **School context**

Church of the Ascension C of E Primary School has 286 pupils on role, many coming from outside the immediate area. The social and economic context of the school is mainly favourable and children achieve exceptionally well, above the national average. A small number have free school meals. There are a small number of EAL pupils and the SEN register is below average. Local links with the church are good.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Church of the Ascension C of E Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.**

Church of the Ascension is an outstanding church school sustained by a clear and strong Christian vision. All stakeholders, including the wider community, have confidence in the school to deliver a very high quality of education.

#### **Established strengths**

- Pupils demonstrate high achievement across a wide spectrum of learning and behaviour.
- Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely well met due to the outstandingly strong Christian ethos that underpins everything in the school.
- Care and concern for others is a strong feature throughout the school.

#### **Focus for development**

- To identify and implement opportunities for evaluating the impact of collective worship on learners in order to provide clear conclusive evidence that informs planning and development.
- Carry out a revision of current aims and mission statements in order to more effectively identify the school's vision, bearing in mind what is so effectively achieved in practice.

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

Pupils positively express ways in which they are very effectively valued in school. They speak about strong relationships with all adults. High levels of confidence and good self esteem are, according to parents, nurtured exceptionally well in school by both the headteacher and all staff. Children are enthusiastic about learning in the widest sense and learn effectively. The school positively and regularly recognises achievement and pupils are expected to strive for excellence. Children develop a strong sense of responsibility and knowledge of good conduct founded on clear Christian values, which are visibly lived out in the school community. Pupils demonstrate pride in their Christian heritage providing clear explanations of the many artefacts and of work displays around their school. Learners feel

secure due to the very supportive care provided. Parents, staff, headteacher and governors give a strong and consistent message, about how Christian values underpin the children's outstanding personal development and maturity. Families of all faiths and none place a high value on this inclusive community. Many specifically choose the school because of its Christian ethos. The school's Christian values have a very strong impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. Children are effectively influenced by PSHE, RE and circle time activities to develop positive, sensitive and interactive relationships. There is clear evidence of older pupils taking significant responsibility for younger ones and everyone showing respect. Health and fitness are highly valued by pupils and staff. The school is positively involved in initiatives to enhance ecological, health and well being opportunities for all children. Pupil attendance is high. Parents express how children want to come to school. It is a calm, warm welcoming place where high standards of good behaviour and discipline are always expected. The headteacher identifiably influences pupil's ability to forgive and be reconciled to others through fair and compassionate interventions.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Collective worship holds a central place in the life of the school. It has a good impact on their spiritual and moral development. Children talk about its impact positively. They can express how it is important to them and why. They are well able to remember and reflect on how it influences their behaviour and life. One child said, "I used to have a temper but now I know that it's best to treat others as I want them to treat me". Pupils believe coming together like a family is an important aspect of what their school values. Children and parents appreciate the strength of Christian values expressed in collective worship. Collective worship shows good consideration of all ages and is frequently inspiring. Evidence of the Anglican heritage is strong through prayers, blessings and saying the peace. Children enjoy good links with the church through regular school visits from the vicar and celebration services held there. Parents value these opportunities to be involved in worship. The recent review of the collective worship policy strengthens the planning and provides consistent guidance to all staff when leading worship. A very respectful and calm atmosphere is cultivated deliberately during collective worship. Acts of worship are informally evaluated with focus groups of pupils and discussion with the vicar, but not currently recorded in a consistent and useful way.

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

The headteacher and governors articulate the vision of the school extremely effectively. Foundation governors are very familiar with and support the ethos. They acknowledge that the head's own Christian commitment and spirituality greatly influence this. Governors collaborate well with the headteacher to lead the school and bring challenge to the outstanding evaluative processes in place. Very secure monitoring is carried out effectively with consistent consideration of the school as a church school and developments are identified in school improvement planning. The recently appointed collective worship co-ordinator is enthusiastically influencing the quality of worship. The vicar and foundation governors very actively promote the Anglican foundation and the vicar acts as a spiritual mentor to the headteacher. New staff benefit from an induction process that makes exceptionally clear the school's Christian vision and ethos. They join a strong team who share in developing this vision. Parents confirm that they are positively informed and their views about the school are valued and acted upon. They are extremely supportive of the links made with the Christian worshipping community. The headteacher's leadership and management style is very highly valued by parents, governors and staff.