

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Bletchington Parochial Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School

Weston Road
Bletchington
Kidlington
OX5 3DH

Diocese: Oxford

Local authority: Oxfordshire
Dates of inspection: 27th January 2012
Date of last inspection: 23rd January 2009
School's unique reference number: 123115
Headteacher: Mrs Kim Amos
Inspector's name and number: Lynne Chillingworth NS 429

School context

Bletchington is a small rural primary school that has a well established relationship with the parish church and is at the heart of village life. Most of the 66 pupils are from White British backgrounds. The school has experienced significant challenges recently due to long term sickness of staff and the rector as well as a vacancy for a foundation governor. The long serving headteacher is retiring.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bletchington as a Church of England school are satisfactory

An ethos of love and nurture together with a well established range of implicitly Christian values underpins the strong family atmosphere of this school enabling pupils to feel valued and secure.

Established strengths

- A strong, inclusive family atmosphere based on a well established Christian ethos
- Happy, confident and articulate pupils who demonstrate great care for one another and whose good personal and social development is well supported by the school's implicitly Christian values
- The significant contribution of staff expertise to the Christian character of the school

Focus for development

- Foundation governors should ensure that a review of the school's Christian vision is inclusive of all stakeholders in identifying a set of core values that are clearly defined and understood from a distinctively Christian perspective.
- Foundation governors should ensure that robust monitoring and evaluation of the school's distinctive Christian character is systematic and inclusive of all stakeholders with outcomes informing future strategic planning

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

Pupils are happy, secure and nurtured in the warm family atmosphere created in the school. Their academic achievement is satisfactory. Pupils are confident and articulate, demonstrating good personal, social and spiritual development in their care and concern for one another. Implicitly Christian values underpin strong and supportive relationships throughout the school community and significantly contribute to the well being and nurture of the pupils. Pupils articulate how some of the school's values influence their daily lives and many give examples of how they are learning to take responsibility for one another and for their attitudes and actions. Few, however, recognise the distinctively Christian perspective of the values that contribute to their development or what it means to belong to a church school. Pupils' engagement with the local community and with fundraising for charities contribute well to their developing sense of responsibility to contribute to the society in which they live but as yet they do not relate these to acts of Christian stewardship. Religious education makes a significant contribution to pupils' developing knowledge and understanding of

Christianity for which the parish church is well used as a resource. Pupils' knowledge of other faiths is developing and contributes well to their respect for those from different faith and cultural backgrounds. However, their perceptions of Christianity as a worldwide faith are limited. The lack of religious education displays throughout the school to effectively support pupils' learning and to provide opportunities for reflection to aid their spiritual development is inconsistent with the importance placed on the subject. Christian signs and symbols in the assembly room effectively signal the school's Christian foundation. Pupils discuss these with interest and a developing understanding of their significance. However, there are few other examples elsewhere in the school to support pupils' ability to reflect on the school's Christian heritage.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Pupils enjoy the daily act of collective worship in which all feel included, valued and affirmed. They participate with enthusiasm, however, not all pupils recognise class based occasions as worship. They particularly enjoy planning and leading acts of worship. The assembly room, in which Christian symbolism and a range of attractive displays effectively support the school's Christian tradition, significantly enhances the importance of worship in the school. It contributes well to creating to a worshipful atmosphere to which pupils respond well. A worship table provides an effective focal point for worship and some pupils are beginning to recognise similarities between this and the altar in the church. Inconsistent staff attendance at worship, however, detracts from the central importance of the school family worshipping together. Planning for worship is not yet sufficiently cohesive to effectively support the development of themes and class based assemblies. Key events in the Christian calendar are celebrated, occasionally using the parish church. These opportunities, however, are not yet sufficiently frequent for pupils to fully appreciate the links and similarities between worship in school and in the Anglican community. Contributions to worship by the church have been less consistent during the long illness and subsequent retirement of the rector. However, members of the church community occasionally contribute well to worship in school, inspiring pupils to attend family activities in the church. Support from the church for school worship is likely to be strengthened in the near future when the new rector is in post. Monitoring and evaluation of collective worship has begun to influence practice, however, it is at the early stages and is not yet sufficiently systematic or inclusive to effectively inform governors' strategic planning.

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

The school has a long established Christian tradition that is recognised by the whole school community. A range of implicitly Christian values informs the work of the school. However, a set of core values defined from a distinctively Christian perspective and recognised as such by all stakeholders has not yet been established. The leadership of key members of staff in collective worship and religious education significantly enhances the school's Christian character. The school enjoys a strong and supportive relationship with parents. They appreciate the school's Christian ethos and especially the headteacher's leadership in creating and sustaining the family atmosphere that they say contributes very effectively to their children's well being. Parents' and pupils' views are greatly valued and readily acted upon, however, systematic opportunities for them to contribute to the evaluation of the school's distinctive Christian character have not yet been provided. The school's strategic plan appropriately prioritises the strengthening of the school's Christian values and its relationship with the church. An action plan relating to church school issues is kept under review. As yet opportunities for the spiritual development of staff and governors have not been prioritised. Governors are very committed to the work of the school and know it well through informal monitoring and anecdotal evidence. Progress in developing sharply focused and robust monitoring and evaluation of the school's distinctive Christian character, however, has been impeded by significant challenges with lack of continuity due to extensive sickness of staff and the rector as well as a vacancy for a foundation governor. Governors and church representatives are commended for their efforts to bridge the gaps created by these vacancies, which are being resolved. The governors are committed to maintaining and strengthening the Christian character of the school through the appointment of a new headteacher. They recognise that when the new headteacher, rector and foundation governor are in place it will be an opportune time to review the school's Christian vision and core values. The diocese provides valued support to the school. Progress has been made on issues identified at the last inspection.