

Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools

Report

School:	Evercreech Church of England Primary School, Paradise Crescent, Evercreech, Shepton Mallet BA4 6EH
Status:	Voluntary Controlled
Diocese:	Bath and Wells
Local Authority:	Somerset County
Date of Inspection:	17th October 2008
Date of last Inspection:	3rd and 7th October 2003
School's unique ref. no.	123755
Name of Headteacher:	Heather Barraclough
Chair of Governors:	Carol Searle
Inspector's name & NS no:	Sue Walker - 391

School Context

Evercreech is a village primary school catering for 138 children. Whilst the majority of children live in the village and its surrounding hamlets, a significant minority travel to the school from the neighbouring town. A large percentage of children come from agricultural backgrounds. Thirty nine children have special educational needs, three with statements, and seven children have English as an additional language. There has been considerable staff turbulence in the recent past.

Summary Judgement

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Evercreech Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

The headteacher is well supported by staff and Governors in creating an ethos that has explicitly Christian values at its heart. The impact of these values is evident in the celebration of children's success in all areas of school life, whatever their need or their ability.

Established Strengths

- The outstanding Christian role model provided by the Headteacher, fully supported by all Governors and members of staff
- The good relationships between all members of the school community, based on Christian values
- The mutually supportive relationship with the parish that places the school at the heart of the community

Focus for development

- Establish strategies for monitoring and evaluating the impact of worship on the everyday lives of children
- Establish procedures for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's work in maintaining and developing its Christian distinctiveness
- Widen children's experiences of a range of Christian worship and of the place of Anglican practice within the life of the church
- Provide further opportunities to develop children's knowledge and understanding of world faiths in this country

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

The school's status is proclaimed through Christian symbols and through colourful displays that value children's work and celebrate God's creation. Children are happy and secure in school and they are valued as individuals. Parents appreciate the way in which success in all areas of school life is celebrated and rewarded and children are enthusiastic about the 'Golden Book' that records their successes. They benefit from loving relationships between all members of the school community. These good relationships are particularly evident in the care and consideration given by all children and staff to children with extreme special needs. Children's social and moral development is supported by a behaviour policy that is underpinned by Christian values of forgiveness and reconciliation. Religious Education provides good support for the spiritual dimension of children's development. This is seen in the depth of their thinking as they reflect on the beauty of the world. They are encouraged to write their own prayers and know that they are "talking to God" and that "He is always there". Children are beginning to learn about the festivals and customs of other faiths, but there are no opportunities to visit their places of worship and children's knowledge of other faiths and beliefs is limited. There are good links with the Parish Church but children have little knowledge of the Church as a

place of Anglican worship or of its place in their cultural past. Parents say that they are well informed about school events and appreciate daily opportunities to speak to senior staff on the playground. They believe that the school is held in high esteem in the village because of its contribution to village life and children's good behaviour and politeness.

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

Collective Worship is central to the school day. Children say that they enjoy worship, especially the opportunities provided for them to contribute through drama and reading their own prayers. Major festivals are celebrated in the Parish Church. Children say they enjoy these special occasions and they have a good understanding of what they celebrate. The Vicar regularly leads worship in school, and links between Church and community are being strengthened by parish Sunday worship held each term in the school hall. These services are popular with parents, children and parishioners and are increasing children's experience of Anglican worship. However, opportunities for leaders of other Christian groups to lead worship are limited. Children know that what they learn in worship helps them in their everyday lives, explaining that "it helps us to care for others". They know the Lord's Prayer, they pray at other times during the school day and say that they say private prayers at home. These opportunities for prayer and for reflection in daily worship are having a positive impact on the spiritual dimension of their development. Children's mature attitude to worship was seen during the inspection as they entered the church for Harvest Festival. They demonstrated reverence as they prayed and respect as they took part or watched the contributions of others. Worship themes are clearly planned and follow the church year. However, although staff monitor daily worship regularly there are few examples given of how worship might be improved or of the quality of its impact on the children's spiritual development.

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

The school's Christian ethos is explicit in all its documentation. Parents say that they are aware of its Church affiliation and appreciate the Christian teaching it provides. Foundation governors and the headteacher have established a mutually supportive relationship between church, school and community and this is valued by parents. School leaders place great importance on listening to parents and provide good feedback through an informative annual report.. The Chair of Governors visits the school regularly and is very supportive, as are other foundation governors. However, they have no formal procedures for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the effectiveness of the school's work in developing its Christian character. The headteacher provides an outstanding Christian role model and articulates a clear Christian vision for the school. She is well supported by all staff and by Foundation Governors. Their vision is shared by everyone in the school community and has Christian values and beliefs at its core.

This inspection was carried out on behalf of the Diocese of Bath & Wells in whose area the school is set, in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection framework used is that established by The National Society of the Church of England for the denominational inspection of church schools for all dioceses in England and Wales.

Your comments or complaints should be addressed to the Education Department, The Diocese of Bath & Wells, The Old Deanery, Wells, Somerset BA5 2UG. Further information about inspection of church schools can be obtained from the National Society's website at www.natsoc.org.uk.