

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St James Church of England Aided Primary School

Vicarage Road
Hereford
HR1 2QN

Diocese: Hereford

Local authority: Hereford
Dates of inspection: October 3rd 2007
Date of last inspection: April/May 2002
School's unique reference number: 116885
Headteacher: Ann Mundy
Inspector's name and number: Brian Allaway NS 397

School context

St James C of E Primary School has 200 pupils on roll. Most pupils are of a White British background and are admitted from the locality and surrounding area. An increasing number of pupils come from different countries and are of minority ethnic groups. A small, but growing number of pupils are in the early stages of learning English.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St James as a Church of England school are outstanding

This is a very successful and friendly school where relationships are excellent and the curriculum provides rich and varied opportunities to promote the children's spiritual and social development. The pupils have good attitudes to their work, behave very well and are proud of their school. Staff, governors and parents work well together to promote a strong Christian ethos.

Established strengths

- Strong and effective leadership by the headteacher and the vicar
- An explicit Christian ethos which permeates all aspects of school life
- Collective worship is central to the school day and is valued by staff and pupils
- A secure and well taught religious education (RE) curriculum which makes relevant connections between religious belief and everyday life

Focus for development

- Review the school brochure and include information for parents about the principles which underpin the school's excellent provision for collective worship
- Involve pupils in developing strategies to evaluate the impact of collective worship

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

The school successfully achieves its mission statement of ... *providing the highest quality education within the context of Christian belief and practice*. St James School is a strong, lively learning community where individuals are valued and where relationships are excellent. The school is confident in its Christian commitment and communicates this well to parents and pupils through newsletters, the school brochure and in the rich variety of curricular experiences offered and through the school's excellent website. There are many visual signs and symbols and displays of pupils' work that emphasise the Christian life of the school. Pupils behave well and have a strong sense of responsibility and care for others. Pupils' skills and accomplishments are valued highly and the reward system is appreciated by the children. Children's personal and spiritual development is fostered very well through a lively and dynamic religious education curriculum. Staff regularly attend and participate in worship and this provides an excellent example to the pupils and gives these occasions status in the

school day. A range of successful initiatives is in place to support pupils' social and emotional development. The headteacher and the vicar together offer excellent leadership and the relationship between church and school is very good. Parents value the school's Christian witness and this is well summed up by a parent who said,
'The school will always go the extra mile to show care and concern'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is underpinned by a well considered and accessible set of principles which are clearly evident in practice. There are detailed records which indicate that over time pupils experience a wide range of worship styles and themes. The school has a well considered action plan for further development which is the result of good self-evaluation. Pupils value their experiences of worship and approach assemblies with a sense of anticipation. They have good opportunities to participate and also enjoy the occasions when classes present their own assemblies. Occasional classroom worship affords the pupils with opportunities to worship in more intimate gatherings. Singing is tuneful and spirited. Religious artefacts and music are used sensitively to create an appropriate atmosphere and mood which pupils appreciate. Prayers, such as the School Prayer and the Lord's Prayer are regular features of collective worship. Worship is accessible to the ages and aptitudes of the children and they are provided with valuable opportunities to express ideas and opinions and to engage in silent prayer. Links with the parish church are good and the headteacher, vicar and visiting speakers provide the pupils with a rich variety of leadership styles. Governors are kept up-to-date with what is happening in collective worship through the link governor. The excellent practice in worship is not communicated to parents well enough in the school brochure.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

A lively and relevant RE curriculum is in place and this is underpinned by a good policy and scheme of work. Teachers' planning is effective and the subject is well resourced. Children's knowledge is good and as they move through the school the pupils have a growing awareness of the life and teaching of Jesus. They also express an understanding of some of the beliefs and celebrations of the other major world faiths. A strong feature of RE is that pupils are encouraged to make links between religious belief and action in their own lives. This was exemplified well when some Year 2 pupils were considering harvest and the importance of sharing with the world's poor. The school holds an excellent portfolio of previously completed RE work which is strong evidence of the range of work and experiences undertaken over a period of time. There is evidence that the subject has been led well over recent years. Teaching is good and provides pupils with opportunities to respond to open questions. Displays of pupils RE work around the school are a good indicator of the value placed by the school on this area of the curriculum. There is a good range of resources to aid pupils' learning. Some imaginative and dynamic old testament work is taught extremely well through drama and role play by a visiting speaker.

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

A strong leadership team is ably led by the headteacher who ensures that provision for the pupils' personal and spiritual development is in place. Governors actively promote the school's Christian vision. RE and worship are given status within the curriculum and teaching of RE is very good. There are strong relationships with the community and the school staff and governors are very accessible to parents. The vicar is particularly supportive of the school and offers good pastoral leadership. The school uses questionnaires well to gather pupils' and parents' views. This process does not yet systematically seek pupils' opinions about worship. The school is a welcoming and open community and engages well with a range of visitors who enhance the pupils' experiences of worship. Personal relationships are excellent at all levels. Non-teaching staff make an excellent contribution to the pupils' development and welfare. The school continually reflects on its work and seeks to improve its practice and its self evaluation procedures are outstanding.