

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools

### Report

School:	<b>Shipham Church of England First School, Turnpike Road, Shipham, Winscombe, Somerset BS25 1TX</b>
Status:	<b>Voluntary Controlled</b>
LA:	<b>Somerset County Council</b>
Date of Inspection:	<b>15 March 2007</b>
Date of last Inspection:	<b>October 2001</b>
School's unique reference no:	<b>123812</b>
Name of Headteacher:	<b>Mrs Antonia Gwynn</b>
Chair of Governors:	<b>Mr Alisdair Hotston-Moore</b>
Inspector's name & NS no:	<b>Miss Susan Barton 162</b>

### School Context

Shipham Church of England First School is situated in the centre of the village on the Mendip hills of Somerset. It is a voluntary controlled Church school with 66 children on roll and growing in popularity. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds.

### Summary Judgement

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a Church of England school are good.** The strong Christian ethos emphasises Christian values and attitudes which are applied and learnt for life. The warmth which emanates throughout the school comes from the love and respect shown to all the school community.

## **Established Strengths**

- The strong leadership of the Headteacher with a clear Christian vision for the school.
- The high level of commitment of the foundation governors in supporting the Christian education of the children.
- The strong links between church and school.

## **Focus for development**

- To involve other Christian denominations in worship.
- Make the Church school foundation more explicit in the prospectus.

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

The school is based on Christian values and love and respect for each other are evident throughout. The children are secure and happy in this welcoming school which has a genuine warmth about it. The 'Golden' assembly time strongly affirms both Christian values and the inclusiveness of the school. The collage in the front entrance of the school, produced by a local artist with the help of the children, reinforces the link between the church and school. Displays in the classrooms and hall further promote the distinctiveness of this church foundation. Worship and religious education are strong contributors to the spiritual and moral development of children. Opportunities to explore God's creation are evident in many areas of the curriculum which provides children with time to reflect, observe and wonder. In the foundation stage a birthday prayer is said for the child and for others whose birthday it is across the world, so raising awareness of children around the world. Children know the difference between right and wrong and recognise Biblical teaching as a code for life. Achievements are celebrated each week when children show that they are proud of each other. Good behaviour is modelled by using puppets and role play. The teachers are very good role models displaying very good relationships. They work together well through collaboration and cooperation. Other cultures are introduced through the curriculum and children's awareness is raised in such topics as 'ballooning around the world' as well as an African drummer visiting to enhance learning about Kenya. The close link with the parish church strengthens the Christian foundation. The Bishop of Bath and Wells attended a service to affirm village and church links, which further enhanced the distinctiveness of this church school.

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

Collective worship is important in the life of the school. The good quality planning of half termly themes enables children to gain good understanding. The children enter and leave the hall in a calm and respectful way, listening to appropriate music which helps to create a worshipful atmosphere. The table with coloured cloths for the churches seasons, cross, candle and flowers provides a

good focus along with the growing display of the theme. Children clearly explain the theme as it develops. Children are attentive and responsive showing interest and respect. Time for stillness and reflection is provided for individuals to think of others and situations close to them. This is a valued time. Children are taught what it means to pray and encouraged to write prayers which are read in worship and before lunch. The Anglican faith is introduced appropriately for the age of children with the involvement of the priest-in-charge, through simple religious sentences, greetings and visits to church for special and family services. Staff who attend worship enjoy the calmness and feel that it is a time to affirm their faith and understanding.

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

The headteacher's good leadership and vision enables the Christian character of the school to be positively acted on. Christian values are the key, providing time for stillness, space, reflection and observation in a busy working day. She provides good pastoral as well as professional support to staff which is very much appreciated. Suggestions from adults and children are listened to, consideration given and responded to appropriately which helps to ensure all feel valued. The foundation governors are a strength to the school. They support the church foundation very well, being committed and involved, ensuring quality Christian education for the children. They undertake monitoring and evaluation of collective worship and religious education thoroughly and make suggestions for further improvement which is noted in the 'church foundation' section of the school improvement plan. Issues raised in the last report have been acted on and are being further developed well. Although the school prospectus notes good Christian aims it does not make the church foundation sufficiently explicit. Parents and children are provided with the opportunity to evaluate the church foundation. Their responses are very positive, such as 'I am privileged to have the children here.' 'Children learn Christian principles for life and apply them'. Links with the parish church are strong. The spiritual dimension of the school is strengthened through prayer and church services. Information regarding the church is disseminated through school as well as school events through the church. The PCC and community coffee shop generously support the school with the funding of events. The church also provides leavers with a small present. There is no inclusion of other local Christian denominational leaders in worship so limiting the children's experiences and understanding of the church outside Shipham. Good relationships are maintained with the diocese through the provision of courses, support and the resource centre. Year 4 also attend the Wells Cathedral workshop day enabling exploration of the wider Christian church.

*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](http://www.natsoc.org.uk).*