

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Bloxham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Tadmarton Road
Bloxham
Banbury
OX15 4HP

Diocese: Oxford

Local authority: Oxfordshire
Date of inspection: 7th March 2012
Date of last inspection: 25 February 2007
School's unique reference number: 123098
Headteacher: Matthew Ingall
Inspector's name and number: Alan Thornsby NSIN 137

School context

Bloxham is a larger than average sized school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a proportion from ethnic minority groups, including a small number from Traveller families. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils having special educational need and/or disabilities is average. The school has a Partnership Foundation Stage Unit and shares its site with a children's centre.

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

The inclusive ethos of the school demonstrating Christian love in action, the successful nurture programme giving everyone access to successful learning and the commitment to on-going development as a Christian school results in an outstanding learning environment for all pupils.

Established strengths

- The inclusive Christian nature of the school that values each individual and results in respect for each other regardless of background
- The impact of the nurture programme that gives all children access to successful learning and development
- The impact of Christian love and service that results in high academic and personal achievement of pupils

Focus for development

- Building on the present good practice implement formal evaluation procedures for worship as a means of supporting its continuing improvement.
- Ensure that governors and staff continue to explore and celebrate the Christian distinctiveness of the school

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

The inclusive ethos of the school, explicit in the mission statement and underpinned by a high profile nurture programme, is securely founded on Christian love and care in action. It is also reflected in the mission statement 'Inspiring Young Minds.' Excellent relationships, based on mutual trust and honesty ensure that everyone is respected, regardless of their background. The children's centre, connected to the school, provides support for a number of children and their families, as well as easing transition into both pre-school and school. All pupils may access support, especially the use of 'the Robin room' for quiet reflection. Pupils enjoy learning, making a typical comment 'Teachers don't just tell us things, they make learning fun.' Children have a good understanding of the distinctive Christian character of the school because of the high profile of Christian values explicit in school life. They talk about unconditional love, forgiveness and reconciliation explaining 'Jesus died to forgive our sins and we follow his example.' The clear expectations of the behaviour policy and strategies such as CBG's (caught being good) result in outstanding behaviour. Pupils have a powerful

voice through the school council and know that they are listened to because their opinions matter. This includes the opportunity to choose charities to support. All children acknowledge that older children are role models of good behaviour and that everyone is responsible for caring for each other. Religious education has a high profile in school and well-planned lessons, with opportunities for in depth discussion, inform the spiritual and moral decision making of pupils. It also provides pupils of different faiths with the opportunity to share their personal beliefs. Throughout the school RE displays with reflective questions, artefacts and a weekly reflection board celebrate the distinctive nature of the school. The garden created in memory of a well-loved member of staff provides an outdoor reflective area.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is well planned, based on 'Values for Life' and themes from the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) with secure links to Christianity. Although presently the coordinator is on maternity leave, the increased profile and quality of planning since the previous inspection have resulted in an easy transition for the temporary leader. Children enjoy coming together as a whole school despite the difficulties of everyone fitting in the hall. There is no disruption as children make space and the quiet calm atmosphere indicates their reverence and anticipation of learning. Although pupils develop an understanding of Anglican ritual and symbolism because of the focus table with the appropriate liturgical colour, cross and candle, they are adamant that 'There is one God and here everyone can choose how to worship him.' Pupils enjoy a range of leaders, including staff, clergy and other visitors. Pupils readily engage in worship by offering thoughtful answers to questions. The theme of 'service' gave a number of adults the opportunity to share how their Christian faith enabled them to serve others. For example, foundation governors explained their role in school, using a closed and an open daffodil to symbolise the impact of the ethos and values of the school nurturing pupils to blossom. Links are made to Bible stories and verses and pupils write prayers that are shared in worship. They often discuss worship themes with each other and leaders at other times of the day. The high profile of foundation governors working with children has allowed them to make informal evaluations of the impact of worship. This and other informal procedures have enabled them to have an over view of worship. It has also led to the recognition of the need for more formal procedures. The school has very strong links with the local church. The vicar is a regular visitor leading worship and providing pastoral care when needed. The Messy church and church club add a further spiritual dimension to the school. Pupils lead worship in church and members of the community often attend because of the growing sense of spirituality and awe and wonder created by children.

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

Headteacher has a clear vision for the school as a church school recognizing the gift of every individual regardless of faith or none, alongside inclusive mutual respect for each other's differences. As a result of a parental questionnaire, staff and governors revised the mission statement to make it more reflective of the school's distinctive Christian character. This character is now integral to the school improvement plan, giving opportunities to identify and celebrate further aspects of distinctiveness. The role of foundation governors regularly working in school gives them increased opportunities to evaluate the distinctive character and impact of worship in school. This involvement in self-evaluation with the senior leadership team gives the school a good capacity for future development. All governors understand the distinctive Christian character of the school and value Christian values in decision-making and strategic planning. Parents praise the work of the school, recognising its inclusive nature that enables respect and confidence children. Typical of the many parental comments are 'All children are valued here and make progress'; 'They recognise each other's skills and respect everyone.' The close links with the church and community maintained through constant interaction, especially with the children's centre, are also recognised by the comment, 'This school creates a sense of community and common purpose because it respects and celebrates differences.' The school has close links with the diocese, benefitting from training provided. It celebrates its distinctive Christian character in a range of ways, including regular contributions in the community magazine.