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Youth and Education

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STATUTORY INSPECTION
of
ANGLICAN SCHOOLS
S48

INSPECTION REPORT
for

Head Teacher: Caroline Redfern

Inspector: Angela Deakin

Inspection Date: 23rd January 2012

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Redditch, St George's Church of England, Voluntary Controlled First School.

Stevenson Avenue,
Redditch
Worcestershire
B98 8LU

Diocese: Worcester

Local authority: Worcestershire

Date of inspection: 23rd January 2012

Dates of last Section 23 inspection: 26th January 2009

School's unique reference number: 116843

Headteacher: Caroline Redfern

Inspector's name: Angela Deakin National Society Assessor: Joan Furlong(98)

School context

St. George's C.E. First School is located in Redditch, serving one of the most diverse communities in Worcestershire. The majority of children are from ethnic minority groups, many of them speaking English as an additional language. The children come from a variety of religious and cultural backgrounds many of whom are of the Muslim faith. The school has a higher than average number of children eligible for Free School Meals.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. George's First School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

By actively demonstrating Christian values throughout the daily life of the school all members of the school community feel included and valued by the school. Through the Christian, caring and supportive environment of the school, the needs of virtually all children are met whatever their culture or faith. Opportunities to celebrate God's world are frequently created within the happy vibrant atmosphere at the school.

Established strengths

- A welcoming, inclusive and happy school, highly valued by its diverse community.
- Outstanding relationships and team spirit.
- Links with the local church community, particularly in connection with the involvement of the 'Open the Book Team' in Collective Worship.
- Exemplary quality of care for all members of the school community with extremely positive parental support.

Focus for development

- Look for opportunities to develop spiritual experiences through Forest Schools and other areas of the curriculum
- Involve learners further in the organisation and evaluation of Collective Worship.

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

Christian values permeate all aspects of school life and relationships. They are clearly expressed in school documentation and demonstrated in all that the school does. Children willingly share their thoughts with confidence, demonstrating their understanding of how to behave and interact in their school community. They value such things as the St. George's Friendship award and learning about religious festivals. They are aware of responsibilities to themselves as well as to others; "*We need to be here to learn and make our school a better place!*" They appreciate the opportunities to learn about the Muslim religion as it is part of the cultural background of a significant number of their community. Children and adults, including parents from other faiths, talk comfortably about their involvement with and respect for the school. They appreciate the way the school respects and

supports the whole school community both by actively involving them in their children's learning and by respecting their needs and various cultures. Children feel secure and know they can turn to staff and peers for help. The school offers many opportunities for the spiritual growth of learners in worship, RE and parts of the school environment. This is recognised by the children when they refer to their feelings in the school's spiritual garden. The children are effectively encouraged and challenged supporting outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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

The Children's attitudes to worship were excellent and everyone is affirmed by worship experienced in school. Collective Worship is a very important part of school life, often involving members of the church community. During the Collective Worship observed, the children's behaviour was excellent; they awaited with anticipation for the start of the Open the Book (OTB) team presentation. All nine community members took an active part in the story and children from various religious backgrounds eagerly volunteered to become additional actors. The children were fully focused on the story, all taking an active part by joining in the groans for 'Jonah the Groaner'. It was evident that the children really enjoy singing during Collective Worship and respected their special time for reflection and prayer. This was demonstrated by all children whatever their faith. In discussion the members of the OTB Team reflected on the special relationship between the school and the church community both in school and elsewhere. The OTB team were obviously enjoying their church community link with the school and were committed to it continuing. The school celebrates its Anglican tradition in many ways including joining in the celebration of church festivals and learning about Christian rites of passage. In whole school Collective Worship a candle is lit which is surrounded by the priests stole in appropriate liturgical colours on the worship table demarking a special time - "*We light the candle so God can hear it as well.*" Children stated they had enjoyed writing their own prayers and working on tiles for their spiritual garden. They all thought that the garden was a good place to go to reflect on things if you felt sad or needed help. Through careful planning and organisation, stories and festivals from other faiths are included to enhance the children's collective worship experience. The children willingly describe these activities with enthusiasm and developing understanding; sharing pictures, thoughts and feelings with the rest of the school in Collective Worship and with anyone who wants to share in their learning. The latest visits are celebrated by pictures on their school digital display which can be seen by children, staff and visitors.

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

The strong leadership and commitment of the Headteacher and of school governors as critical friends and scrutinisers, ensure that St. George's is easily recognisable as a church school both in the way people treat each other and by proudly displaying the cross of St. George and other Christian artefacts around the school. There is a strong feeling of belonging to St. George's, (one Foundation Governor attended the school and there is now the fourth generation of her family in the school). Everyone is passionate about the school. Christian Values are explicitly displayed in the school prospectus and underpin everything the school does. Staff are committed and enthusiastic, encouraging children to explore and reflect on experiences in relation to Christian Values particularly those of love, care and friendship. Visits to a variety of local places of worship are an integral part of the school's RE curriculum. The introduction & development of Forest Schools has given a new dimension to the school giving children opportunities that they were unlikely to gain elsewhere. This can be further developed to give children enriched spiritual experiences and time to reflect on God's creation. Parents are extremely supportive of the school regardless of religion or cultural background. One parent remarked; "*We are a unique church school*" when discussing ethnic mix. Relationships and communication are carefully managed and nurtured to ensure a positive learning environment for all including parents. "*School does as much as it can to make parents welcome and appreciated.*" Parents actively support the statement in the prospectus that they '*recognise that everyone is special in the eyes of God.*' The school actively encourages the pupil voice in a variety of ways both as individuals and groups. The introduction of the newly formed FAB (Faith and Belief) group will develop this even further. Children have confidence in the FAB group and stated that they thought it would make assemblies even better!