



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Dewhurst St Mary Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Churchgate, Cheshunt, Waltham Cross, Herts EN8 9ND

Diocese of St Albans

LA: Hertfordshire
SIAS Inspection: 6th June 2008
Previous S23 Inspection: March/April 2004
URN: 117415
Headteacher: Mrs Keely Folker
SIAS Inspector Name: Revd Vanessa Cato
SIAS Inspector No:

School Context

Dewhurst St Mary is an average-sized urban school with a mixture of ancient and modern buildings close to the church. Most pupils are white-British with an increasing proportion from minority ethnic groups. There is a wide range of social backgrounds, with free school meals being a little above average. The number of pupils with additional learning needs is average, but increasing. Speech and language ability upon entry is below average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Dewhurst St Mary as a Church of England school are good

The School has a strong mission statement embodying Christian values and principles which have a positive and recognised impact on the children's lives and have contributed significantly to the school's progress. Through good leadership the school offers its pupils exceptional care and guidance and outstanding pastoral provision. While aware of weaknesses, there is a strong desire to develop the Christian ethos, teaching and worship, and strengthen existing ties with the church.

Established strengths

- Excellent pastoral support.
- Good leadership and management.
- Strong Christian values which have a positive impact on pupils' lives and the ethos of the school.

Focus for development

- The school needs to develop a pride in its Church School designation and complement the good displays around the school with stronger visual evidence of its Christian foundation.
- Collective Worship should reflect in practice the wording of the policy and be recorded, monitored and evaluated.
- Develop a good working and supportive relationship with the new Incumbent.

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

Implicit Christian values and the school mission statement form a strong foundation to the work of the school. Pupils, especially the older ones, know these values, quote them readily and consider them to have a strong impact on their lives now and for the future. Some recognise these are Christian values. Pastoral care at Dewhurst St Mary is excellent at all levels and there is evidence of very good peer support. Several children clearly consider the school's ethos and care have turned around their behaviour and achievement, giving them a positive outlook for their future and less possibility of exclusion – one child told how his mother cried when she saw how much her son had improved. Classrooms have prayer tables and there is much to inspire awe and wonder, especially in the Reception classroom. Excellent provision is made for the learning and appreciation of music. There is clearly an encouragement to pray, and several children commented that they have been inspired to pray regularly at home. Other faiths and cultures are respected and taught and the needs of pupils from minority groups are well met. Dewhurst St Mary is linked with a school in Zambia.

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

The school is aware that this is an area for improvement. The policy is very good, but there is a significant gap between policy and practice. There is currently good support from a local priest and a strong expectation that the new Incumbent will give considerable help in this area. The church is sometimes used for worship, e.g. at Christmas, and the children have joined other schools for worship at the Abbey, but, other than the Church Year display, there is little evidence that the school draws on the Anglican tradition for its daily Collective Worship. The Collective Worship observed was attended by parents and was well-rehearsed, enjoyable, varied and child-led. The focal point for worship is not clearly visible, though the proposed cross to be made by a local blacksmith will help in this. The school does not make enough use of worship songs. There is also a lack of time for reflection in worship. There is no detailed record of Collective Worship or evidence of monitoring or evaluation of worship.

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

The school has made excellent progress. The Headteacher gives a strong lead in the school and is well supported by her staff and the Governing Body. Support of pupils is outstanding and the staff are excellent role models. The staff work well as a team and support one another well. The school has an open door policy and the new Parent Council builds on the good support already afforded parents. Parents have a positive view of the leadership and the effect on the pupils of the school as a Church school. The school has a good selection of resources for RE and Collective Worship, and has made RE a priority area for development. The Headteacher and Chair of Governors attend Diocesan events and have a positive but realistic enthusiasm for the school. There is an awareness of the need for further improvement and a willingness to work on areas of weakness. It is to be hoped the new Incumbent will encourage a greater confidence in being a Church School.