

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Mordiford Church of England Primary School, Mordiford, Herefordshire, HR1 4LW

Diocese: Hereford

Local authority: Herefordshire

Date of inspection: 6th October 2010

Date of last inspection: 27th March 2007

School's unique reference number: 116832

Headteacher: Mrs E. Kearns

Inspector's name and number: Mr R. Sharples NS 398

School context

Mordiford is a small school of 135 pupils set in a rural location about 3 miles outside Hereford. The children mostly come from white, British families and the school has a small number of pupils with special educational needs. Since the last inspection the school has changed its status from Voluntary Controlled to Foundation.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Mordiford CE Primary school as a Church of England school are outstanding

Mordiford CE Primary school is an outstanding Church school. The children thrive in a stimulating and lively atmosphere which is underpinned by Christian values. The school's self evaluation is developing well as governors and staff come fully to terms with the recent change of status.

Established strengths

- The reflective, thoughtful and spiritually aware pupils
- The visionary and imaginative leadership of the headteacher
- The powerful teamwork evident among the whole staff group
- The strong and extensive community and church links

Focus for development

- Increase the participation of pupils in worship through the 'Learning to Lead' project
- Establish, through appropriate governor involvement, clear celebration and expression of the school's achievements in worship using such things as the prospectus and website

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

Mordiford's pupils are justifiably proud of their school and their work. They greatly appreciate the opportunities offered to them and demonstrate this appreciation in their exemplary behaviour and a very positive attitude to work. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and provide outstanding models on which the pupils base friendships with their peers. The impact of this modelling is seen clearly in the excellent conduct of the children and the great emphasis that they place on care and concern for each other. The pupils themselves show this care in their roles as Buddies in the 'Listening Link' through which certain individuals have responsibility for the well being of the other children. The school has very high standards in all areas which stem from the powerful value driven ethos based in its Christian character. Of particular importance is the 'Learning to Lead' project through which children take an active part in developments such as the improved provision of playtime resources. This project not only encourages children to play a full part in the life of the school but alongside very good teaching and an imaginative curriculum which includes 'Philosophy for Children' (P for C) creates an atmosphere of sophisticated thinking. As one child said, '...

the teachers get your brain going...'

The Christian context of the school has a powerful impact on children's understanding of community, shown clearly by their charity work and the inclusion of Christian ideas in P for C. The school's environment is very lively and engaging and features beautiful displays which celebrate children's work. These provide stimulus for thought, a substantial proportion of which is explicitly Christian in content. Attention to detail, such as soft music in the entrance hall, further enhances the pupils' context for learning. The outdoor spaces are well used especially the native American Tipi which provides a delightful setting for discussions and reflective 'circle time' activities.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship at Mordiford occupies a central place in the children's experience. Individual acts of worship are well planned and skilfully led; indeed one act of worship seen during the inspection was quite outstanding. Worship is linked to curriculum topics in order to widen the scope of children's thinking, and to strengthen the Christian context of their learning. Pupils enjoy the worship in which they share and they speak with understanding of the various components such as prayer and stillness. The local church is used for celebration of festivals such as Easter and Christingle. These occasions are greatly appreciated by parents and other adults connected with the school. Children play an active part in worship, reading prayers and Bible passages and are very keen to increase their opportunities for leadership and participation. The value placed upon worship was summed up by a child who said '*I don't go to church every week and if we didn't have worship in school I would miss it*'. Teachers equally spoke of the times when worship contributes to their own spiritual growth. The pupils' awareness of Anglican and more general Christian traditions such as the church year, prayer and liturgy is strengthened by the acts of worship which occur in both school and church. This awareness is further enhanced by excellent work in religious education (RE) which, alongside the other curriculum subjects, is taught in such a way as to constantly challenge and develop children's spiritual understanding and thought. The local incumbent plays an important role in the school, leading worship where appropriate and providing an informed resource for RE.

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

The school is well organised, the headteacher's energy and vision being felt across all activities. This vision is shared by the whole staff team and by the governors who have all worked hard to maintain the distinctive character of the school since the change to Foundation status two years ago. The foundation governors are well aware of their responsibilities and play a full role in the management of the school. The recommendations of the previous Church School Inspection have been taken account of so that, for instance, the school is clearly identified as a church school on its signage. However the outstanding work of the school in worship is not as clearly celebrated in the prospectus and website as are other aspects of school life. Similarly the Christian context of the school's work, which is felt so strongly in the daily life of the school, is not clearly expressed in documentation which means that it is difficult for governors and staff to monitor and evaluate the work that is being done. For example the self-evaluation process prior to the inspection led to judgements of 'good' in various areas which under further scrutiny during the inspection were clearly 'outstanding'.

Parents speak very highly of the school, they appreciate the Christian context of their children's learning and the emphasis placed on questioning and critical thinking. The staff maintain excellent care of the children which ensures that any difficulties or concerns are dealt with effectively and efficiently.