

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools

### Report

School:	<b>Staplegrave Church of England Primary</b>
Status:	<b>Voluntary Controlled</b>
Diocese:	<b>Bath and Wells</b>
Local Authority:	<b>Somerset County</b>
Date of Inspection;	<b>28 March 2008</b>
Date of last Inspection:	<b>July 2003</b>
School's unique ref. no.	<b>123801</b>
Name of Headteacher:	<b>Kirsti Nelson</b>
Chair of Governors:	<b>Paul Bailey</b>
Inspector's name & NS no:	<b>Daphne Spitzer - 37</b>

### School Context

Staplegrave Church of England Primary School is a popular school with 177 pupils on roll. It is set in attractive accommodation and grounds in Staplegrave village, on the western suburbs of the county town of Taunton. Most of the pupils are white British. The headteacher was appointed 2 years ago, having previously held the position of deputy head.

### Summary Judgement

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Staplegrave Church of England Primary as a church school is outstanding**

Christian values shine out of Staplegrave Church School. The warmth of this school community is exceptional. The new headteacher, in a very short time has, together with the staff and governors, created a uniquely special culture in

which children enjoy learning and their personal development can thrive. A governor plays a key role throughout the whole school community assisting in the school's development as a distinctive church school and also acting as an unofficial 'chaplain'. The school has strong links with the local church, the wider community and the Diocese.

### **Established Strengths**

- Vision and very effective leadership and management of the headteacher
- A committed governor who has a pivotal role in school coordinating worship, leading RE and working in close partnership with the headteacher and governing body
- Strong Christian ethos that is highly valued by parents and children

### **Focus for development**

- Raise the profile of RE further by introducing whole school systems for assessment
- Continue to develop the new structure in the school grounds to further promote the children's spiritual development
- Follow the "Africa Project" to its natural conclusion by visiting and making a sustainable link with the school.

### **The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding in the way it meets the needs of all learners**

The school's secure, happy ethos ensures that children feel special and valued and enjoy school life. Children feel cared for and loved by the whole community. They are trusted to be mature and their self esteem is high. Parents comment on the way the school places a priority on its teaching of social responsibility. The school council contributes much to the life of the school. The children find staff treat them with consistency and speak with one voice. One child summarised the Christian values promoted by the school as "treat someone as you'd like to be treated" and "love your neighbour as yourself." Spiritual development is a high priority in the daily life of the school. Each classroom has a reflection corner draped with the appropriate church liturgical colour. There is also a candle, a cross and book of prayers. The prayers are written by the children at the start of the new school year. Each day a child in turn selects a prayer to read before lunch. In this way, consistent whole school routines are established as well as a strong sense of belonging. Religious Education is important in the school. The children enjoy learning this subject and standards are high. They can apply their knowledge of Christianity and other religions to question issues of current affairs in a mature manner. Children are fully aware that they belong to a church school. Christian symbols are integral to all the buildings. Displays around school reflect its Christian values and close connections with the local and wider church. Grounds are well maintained. There is much evidence of exceptional parental support, in the construction of a new "outdoor classroom." The school council are currently fully involved in determining a variety of uses for this new project. Relationships at all levels are excellent. Parents value highly the Christian ethos, the way they are consulted

about a wide range of issues and particularly the warmth and approachability of the headteacher. A unique feature of the school is the care shown by the governor, who is a church Lay Reader, shown to the parents as well as to the children. She gives of her time generously and ensures she is available for children, staff and parents, in times of sadness as well as celebration.

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

The daily act of collective worship is very important in the life of the school. It is a meaningful time of the day when everyone enjoys being together. All staff attend and lead worship in turn, with the headteacher playing a key role by leading it each Monday and introducing the theme for the week. Collective Worship is coordinated by the unofficial 'chaplain'. She works in close partnership with the headteacher, planning, monitoring and regularly reviewing the programme. She leads collective worship each week, occasionally more often and has, over the recent period, introduced a distinctively Anglican element to the worship. This is evident through the use of liturgical colours, the beautiful Paschal candle, and a range of greetings, endings and responses. The themes for worship follow the church's seasons very closely. Prefects are given the responsibility of preparing the hall so that the mood is transformed to one of quiet reflection and reverence. Children's behaviour entering and leaving the hall and throughout collective worship on the day of the inspection was impeccable. Their attitudes were exceptionally positive. Children played chime bars during the singing of the hymn. The act of worship was of the highest quality. It focussed on the story of Jesus' appearance to Thomas following the resurrection. Thomas, the disciple was introduced by means of Thomas the tank engine, immediately attracting the attention of younger children. The message of hope and that God is always with us was clearly understood by all. There was a good level of participation by the children, including the praying by a child of her own prayer. A recent act of worship in which a group of children had enacted the "last supper" had been particularly memorable. It typified the best practice, described as one child said, "joining in, not just listening, not feeling left out" and also having "a time to be quiet and listen." Collective Worship is evaluated by staff and governors and its impact on the children is measured informally, for instance, by observations and responses. As yet children have not been involved formally in evaluating collective worship. However, some children summarised the impact of collective worship for them as teaching them to "be kind to one another", "to put other people before you" and "not to harm anyone."

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

The headteacher, staff and governors work very effectively together in promoting the school's Christian vision. This has been reaffirmed recently in a day spent together and the school's Christian aims are shared by the whole school community. The school's aims for the development of its Christian

character are firmly embedded in the school and community section of its school improvement plan and are central to its annual planning. The unofficial 'chaplain' is also helping to develop RE and is currently reviewing the coverage and quality of learning of this core subject. She is working closely with all staff as well as the headteacher to achieve this. In the lesson observed, where young children were learning about the Hindu festival of Divali, they made good progress because the teacher's style was interactive and resources bright and attractive engaging their interest. There is currently no whole school assessment system, although this is now being addressed. Links with the local church are very strong. The headteacher is a member of the local congregation. She is able to ensure every opportunity is taken by the school, to use the church, for instance, for a service to present a Bible to new members of staff, an Education Sunday service as well as school celebrations of Christian festivals such as Easter and Christmas. The school is used on occasional Saturdays for workshop days in connection with church events, such as Mothering Sunday. A shared fund raising project between the school and the church, to build a classroom for a school in Africa, is now on the point of completion. Diocesan links are also very good. A group from the school has recently attended the Children's Festival on a Saturday in Wells and the school subscribes to the diocesan Junior Church Magazine giving each child a copy each week. The school's aim to build strong links with the church is being achieved.

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).