



Stoke Row Church of England School
Stoke Row
Henley-on-Thames
Oxfordshire RG9 5QS



Type of school (Infant, Primary, Middle, Secondary etc)	Primary
Status (VA, VC or Foundation, CTC or Academy)	Voluntary Aided
Diocese	Oxford
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Date of inspection	17 October 2007
Date of last inspection	26 March 2001
School's Unique reference number	123136
Name of Headteacher	Mr Steve McTegart
Name of Chair of Governors	Mrs Vanessa Potter
Inspector's name and NS inspector's number	Mrs Judith Babb 139

Context

Stoke Row Church of England School is adjacent to the parish church at the heart of a thriving village. Pupils are mainly from advantaged white British backgrounds. In April 2007, the school changed its status from voluntary controlled to voluntary aided.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Stoke Row Church of England School as a Church of England school are good

Stoke Row Church of England School has a strong Christian ethos, most evident in its care of pupils and their families. The move to voluntary aided status has re-energised the community. Imaginative deployment of resources, seen recently in the use of the church building for daily Worship, shows that the school has the capacity for even greater distinctiveness.

Established strengths

- Happy, confident pupils of whom the school is justly proud
- Excellent modelling of Christian values at work by all staff for all pupils
- Inspiring Acts of Worship led by the Rector and chapel Minister
- A strong community spirit, centred on the school, and fostered by all stakeholders

Focus for development

The school should involve all the appropriate stakeholders, including the Diocese, to:

- establish Religious Education as a leading subject within the newly-formed voluntary aided school
- devise a programme for all aspects of church school status to be incorporated into the school development plan, and then review them in detail regularly using the inspection framework for guidance

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

Acceptance, forgiveness, and reconciliation are amongst the Christian values that form the distinctive ethos of the school. Pupils thrive in this setting, and they are kind to one another, particularly younger pupils. They show respect for the built environment, and incidentally for their cleaner, by changing to indoor shoes without demur. Rules are regarded as 'fair', and the consequences of poor behaviour are fully understood. Curricular provision, including extension and extra-curricular studies, is very good. Programmes for pupils with Special Educational Needs are co-ordinated through the head teacher who emphasises inclusion. The school has acted upon the last S23 inspection; there is now a whole school policy for spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, with monitoring and assessment. The frequent use of the church building has enhanced pupils' spiritual awareness considerably. Pupils are particularly well-rounded personalities, with delightful self-confidence, and hope for the future. Much emphasis is placed on emotional development. This was clear in a most mature article about the disappearance of Madeleine McCann, published in the school newsletter, written by a Key Stage 2 pupil. These aspects of school life are appreciated greatly by parents. The head teacher's maxim: 'Achieve

inspired children through inspired adults' is evident in high standards of teaching and learning, and in respectful relationships between staff and pupils.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The head teacher is the designated co-ordinator for Collective Worship, working to a job description drawn up after the last S23 inspection. Over recent months, the daily assembly has usually been held in the church. Pupils walk there in an orderly fashion, and enter reverently as the organ is played. The team Rector and the local chapel Minister each take assembly once a week, giving a strong lead, with Biblical teaching. Both make the services memorable, and pupils can recall themes and moral lessons well. Even the youngest pupils can say The Lord's Prayer, and all, including the staff, reflect seriously and sing enthusiastically. When the Rector leads, prayers are written and read by pupils, with firm spiritual guidance from him. Pupils, and their parents, also enjoy a weekly celebration assembly. Provision for Worship on the two remaining days is less clear-cut. When there is a Christian festival service (e.g. Easter), many parents attend, and sometimes parishioners. Over their school years, pupils become immersed in the Anglican tradition ('The altar is at the East, and we face it'), but without excluding pupils of other faiths 'who also pray to God'. Planning of themes for Worship is satisfactory. There is no systematic monitoring and evaluation by foundation governors or staff. The parent's right to withdraw a child from Worship, noted following the last inspection, is not stated in documentation as is legally required.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

Pupils of all faiths and none enjoy interesting Religious Education lessons, many of them delivered skilfully. Some of them 'want to read Bible stories at bedtime after a good lesson' according to a parent. They show sound knowledge of many religious facts. The subject positively influences their spiritual and moral development because open-ended questions are asked throughout the lessons. Lesson planning and resources are adequate, though there are no specific Religious Education displays around the school or in the library. To date, there has been no tradition of clergy involvement in the teaching of the subject. The school's interpretation of the Agreed Syllabus is appropriate for its context, with concepts (e.g. the afterlife) for other religions being related firmly to the Christian teaching received in church. Reports on progress in Religious Education are made annually to parents, though exercise books are not marked in sufficient detail to show pupils where to improve. Much of the teaching of Religious Education is 'embedded in the rest of the curriculum', so it is difficult to be sure how much time is allocated to the subject. Discussions with pupils show that they are not sure of the difference between PHSE and Religious Education. The foundation governors have not been involved in monitoring or evaluating the subject. The last S23 report recommended a job specification for the co-ordinator, and this has been achieved. Performance management for the co-ordinator has not been undertaken. Transition to aided status has been recognised by the school as the opportunity to review the status of the subject within the curriculum.

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

The head teacher, encouraged by governors, staff, and parents, has strong vision for the school as a church school. Guided by him, the governing body has worked very hard to make an effective transition from voluntary controlled to voluntary aided status. Of the seven foundation governors, one is a churchwarden who also works at the school, and one is team Minister and ex officio governor. Their presence is invaluable, smoothing the way for pupils to worship often in the church building. Links with the PCC are established, as well as with the local chapel, and prayers are said for the school from time to time. A parent foundation governor is the SEN governor. All governors are active and vigilant. Parent and pupil surveys are taken seriously and acted upon. Governor involvement in self-evaluation for inspection of church school status, however, has been limited. Strategic planning for church school aspects is not established, nor is the monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship and Religious Education by foundation governors. Pupils and former pupils have a strong sense of the school community. A link has been formed with an urban church school to broaden horizons. The parent body is outstandingly supportive, raising substantial sums to enrich the pupils' learning.