

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Queen Eleanor's, Church of England (VA), Junior School**

Queen Eleanor's Road  
Onslow Village, Guildford  
Surrey GU2 7SD

#### **Diocese of Guildford**

Local authority: Surrey  
Date of inspection: 21/11/2012  
Date of last inspection: 29/10/2007  
School's unique reference number: 125188  
Headteacher: Mr Roger Blackburn  
Inspector's name and number: Mr Andrew Rickett (NSI 201)

#### **School context**

Queen Eleanor's is an average size junior school with 239 pupils on roll. The school is over subscribed. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The majority are from a white British background with favourable socio-economic circumstances. There have been considerable recent changes in staff.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Queen Eleanor's as a Church of England school are outstanding**

Queen Eleanor's has made significant progress since the previous inspection in establishing an ethos more grounded in its Christian character. This is making a difference to the pupils' perceptions of matters of faith and belief. It also makes a positive contribution to their attitudes towards learning and their personal development.

#### **Established strengths**

- The extent to which pupils have opportunities to be still and reflect in the school day.
- The quality of relationships between all members of the school community.
- The passion and commitment of the headteacher, supported by key members of staff, in developing the school's Christian character.

#### **Focus for development**

- The pupil voice to lead a review of the school's Christian values in a process involving all members of the school community.
- Ensure that pupils develop the language to articulate their thoughts and opinions at a deeper level in religious education and in the wider curriculum.
- Ensure that governors are fully involved in monitoring and evaluating the impact of the school's Christian values and vision on the personal development and learning of pupils.

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

The school has made good progress since the previous inspection in placing its church foundation more clearly at the centre of school life. Through the collective worship programme, the increased opportunities for pupils to reflect, as well as a heightened awareness generally by staff and pupils of the nature of the Christian character, the school's vision is made explicit. Pupils are comfortable to talk about and express their views on matters of faith and belief in an atmosphere where they know that their opinions will be listened to with respect by their peers. The collective worship programme and 'thoughtful times' help to foster this acceptance of belief as an aspect of life that can be discussed without embarrassment or mistrust. Pupils engage in these discussions with enthusiasm and have strong views which they are keen to share. For example, when talking about forgiveness, pupils willingly offered their opinions on whether, in their view, God would forgive non-Christians as equally as Christians. They are comfortable to engage at this level in sharing views on difficult concepts, trusting that their opinions will be valued and respected. Through this approach, the school is meeting the pupils' spiritual needs by encouraging them to 'open doors' and make their own choices about matters of faith and belief. Christian values are explicitly referred to in the life of the school and the school is keen to explore a set of core values that are shared by the whole school community and reflect their vision. An exciting approach to this is to put pupils at the head of leading this process. The school has made very good progress in looking critically at the quality of pupil achievement and has been successful in putting in place a programme to ensure that every child is making progress in their learning. Pupils say that they enjoy their learning and feel that they can trust their teachers who are there to support and care for them. They have very positive attitudes about the school and value the many opportunities they have to be involved in school life. The school is not afraid to tackle difficult issues. For example, the recent work on anti-bullying has been well received by pupils because it has helped them to understand the meaning of bullying and given them strategies to deal with it. The pupils are adamant that there is little bullying in the school and that they make good friends and feel safe in school.

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

The headteacher has made the development of the impact of collective worship one of his main priorities. He has been very successful in placing acts of worship more firmly at the heart of the school and in making them more meaningful to pupils and adults in the school community. Governors, for example, say that they are 'heartened' that acts of worship have a clear message based on Christian teaching and recognise that the headteacher has worked hard to achieve this. Parents value the increased opportunities for their children to reflect. Pupils talk about 'Christian based assemblies' with 'stories from the Bible' that teach them about Jesus and what He taught us about how to lead our lives. These comments demonstrate the extent to which different members of the school community recognise the growing importance of collective worship and the impact it makes on their lives. A key development in the pupils' worship experience has been the introduction of a weekly opportunity for them to reflect individually and as a class on the given theme. The headteacher has produced excellent material to support classroom teachers in leading these quiet times, with a focus on searching questions that challenge the pupils' understanding. Moreover, the pupils' responses are carefully chosen and become part of the final act of worship of the week. It is because of their direct involvement in this way that they have such positive attitudes towards collective worship. The school is looking at ways to involve them even more in planning and leading acts of worship. There are good systems of monitoring and evaluating the impact of collective worship and the school is keen to explore this further by involving pupils in the process.

The school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Pupils make good progress in religious education (RE) across the Key Stage and achieve well compared with other core subjects. Achievement at the end of Year 6 is at least in line with national expectations. Currently pupils are given the opportunity to give valuable feedback on how they view their progress at the end of each unit of work. The school has identified the need to develop current assessment systems so that they more clearly track pupil progress and identify action to raise standards further. The recently appointed RE leader has a growing understanding of what needs to be done to put in place an effective assessment system. The overall quality of the teaching seen during the inspection was good with some outstanding elements. The best teaching had a good balance between developing pupils' knowledge and applying that knowledge to deepen understanding of belief. For example, in one lesson pupils were encouraged to explore the meaning of marriage through making commitments and then, through a time for reflection, consider what promises they could make to help someone else. Similarly in a lesson on Islam with older pupils, they used their understanding of the five Pillars of Islam to consider what five principles they would choose to lead their lives. The school has identified that this approach to the teaching and learning of RE can be enhanced by ensuring that opportunities to develop a language through which pupils express their thoughts at a deeper level, are applied consistently throughout the lesson. The quality of planning for RE is excellent. The curriculum has been carefully developed to give pupils a balance between Christianity and learning about other world faiths. The quality of teaching resources and support material are excellent. Attitudes towards RE are positive and pupils are engaged and keen to respond in lessons.

The school meets the statutory requirements for religious education.

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

The headteacher is outstanding in his efforts to bring purpose and meaning to the school's Christian character. He has worked tirelessly to place collective worship at the heart of the school and in giving pupils opportunities to be still and reflect on what faith and belief mean. His vision for the school, based on its Christian ethos, shapes his commitment and determination to ensure that pupils achieve their potential in their learning and in their personal development. This is evident through the successful work that the school has done to raise academic standards but not at the expense of developing the whole child. The headteacher is fully supported in this by the deputy who has recently taken on the role of RE subject leader. He has a good understanding of the place of RE as a core part of the school curriculum and a clear grasp of how to develop the subject further. With supportive and knowledgeable governors, the leadership and management of the school has a good capacity to continue to improve as a church school. The governors spoken to highly regard the work that has been done to enhance the Christian ethos of the school and share the headteacher's vision. They have a very good understanding of the school's Christian ethos and ensure that it has a high profile. There are formal systems to monitor and evaluate the Christian ethos. More could be done to involve governors directly in this process, particularly as the school identifies a core set of Christian values and develops its evaluation procedures in line with this. Relations with the local church are very positive and fruitful. The vicar is a valued member of the school community and her involvement in school life, for example in leading acts of worship, is regarded by pupils as a vital part of being a church school. Parents share this view saying that the vicar is a well known figure to the whole school community. The role of the clergy in the life of the school is important to the parish community who have approached the school to seek their views on the appointment of a new vicar. Parents spoken to recognised that the Christian ethos of the school has moved forward under the leadership of the current headteacher. They said that the school has the right balance between promoting its Christian distinctiveness and being inclusive of the whole community. They particularly appreciate the school's efforts to encourage their children to be reflective and to give them opportunities to explore what they believe in, thereby equipping them to make their own informed choices.