

WICKERSLEY ST. ALBAN'S C. OF E. PRIMARY SCHOOL
NOTES FROM HEALTH CHECK IN PREPARATION FOR SIAMS INSPECTION
TUESDAY 13th JUNE

It is the Christian distinctiveness of Wickersley St. Alban's C. of E. Primary School which is central to its successful outcomes for all stake holders. The mission statement states that the school 'seeks to base its life on the love of God shown in Jesus Christ' and this is evident in every aspect of the school's work, in every relationship and in the happy vibrant and committed learners. Even a brief chat with pupils highlights that the school is meeting its aim for children to 'discover their full potential as a child of God.' Pupils are relaxed, confident and respectful learners, who demonstrate highly effective learning behaviours based on Christian values. They speak proudly and eloquently about their school; recognizing that they are nurtured and valued as individuals and that this has allowed them to develop spiritually, morally and socially. They are quick to attribute their enjoyment of learning and school life in general to biblical teaching and a faith that demands high standards. Pupils can recognise and give evidence of how the fact that they attend a church school has had an impact on what they achieve and how they live their lives - both within and beyond the school community.

Prayer areas and faith displays are given a central position in every classroom and throughout the school. These displays are cleverly crafted to be interactive and encourage prayer and response. Outside the Headteacher's Office, central to the school, is the 'help desk' where solace can be sought from biblical quotes to address life's challenges. This enables staff and pupils to use biblical language when dealing with difficulties, giving them a framework to find a solution and move forward. Children were able to describe when they had used the help desk and how the quote they had chosen supported them with resolving issues of fear, anger, friendship etc. Biblical quotes written out and illustrated by the pupils are thoughtfully located, helping to emphasise that this is a church school and this is what supports and inspires the school community. The whole school environment is stimulating and colorful. Displays celebrate the creativity of staff and pupils and the quality of pupils' work. Work across the curriculum is inter-related and underpinned by a love of God's creation. Christian values and British values are woven into the curriculum content - supported by the See Anew materials. R.E. is a high profile subject in the school, which is taught in a lively and creative manner - encouraging debate, questioning and reflection. Theme weeks with a faith focus e.g. Forgiveness Week, enhance the curriculum and allow the school to have a shared learning experience which highlights pupil progress both academically and spiritually. The standards file shows evidence of work of exceptional quality, with a good depth of content, always beautifully presented. Pupils are assessed against key skills required within the R.E. curriculum for each year group and very high percentages of pupils (90%+) are reaching age-related expectations or above. Teaching in R.E. has a direct impact on pupil behaviour, well-being and relationships through school.

A unique and innovative approach to the house system epitomizes how Christian values are interwoven into every strand of this school community. Children are a member of one of four houses, Jordan, Jericho, Sinai and Carmel. Seeking inspiration from the

bible, each house has identified values associated with stories taken from the biblical location of their house name. These values have then supported the head boy and head girl of each house to construct an action plan to address an agreed area of development from the school improvement plan. Areas addressed range from developing spirituality in school to improving spelling. The impact of this is to give pupils a very strong voice, ownership of and involvement in school improvement and an understanding of how Christian teaching has an impact on how we lead our lives now.

Collective Worship is central to school life - it is based on theology - the current focus is the Apostles Creed and it takes a discovery approach to asking and reflecting on big questions such as - "What is Heaven like?" Under the remit of developments initiated by house Jordan there is a worship team - who meet each Friday to plan the delivery of and teaching about different prayers and choose the worship song. This has increased pupil involvement in worship and emphasised the meaning and purpose of prayer. Collective Worship is monitored by house Jordan through questionnaires. Pupils were seen to engage with and thoroughly enjoy a well presented 'Open the Book' act of worship. Children of all ages worshipping through song was a joy to witness. Learners readily reported that they enjoyed assembly, saw great value in it and described how it influenced their daily life. In addition to the 'Open the Book' team, the school benefits from other supportive links with the parish. Worship is led by Rev Hughes and other parishioners support in school generally. This has the impact of pupils seeing faith alive and in action.

Personal faith and a Christian mission drive the leadership team to seek the very best for all the stakeholders in their school and the other schools they support. Christian values give them strength and purpose and the Christian love they demonstrate for the school community is inspirational and clearly mirrored by the pupils in their care. Although justifiably proud of the high standards already achieved in all areas, Alison and Amy are still keen to reflect on their work and consider how they can continue to serve the kingdom of God through developing even further the Christian ethos of their schools.

It was an absolute pleasure to visit and work with you all today and I left feeling uplifted and positive about the future of education.

With regard to next steps we discussed:

- Completing the SEF to highlight the tremendous impact different elements of being an effective church school has on outcomes in all areas. Making the links explicit between for example success in sport or the arts with the fact that the pupils are all nurtured to grow and develop to their full potential as children of God.
- Ways in which to develop links with different denominations and faith groups.
- The development of an outside area for reflection and worship.

Rebecca Davies