DIOCESE OF OXFORD
Name and Address of the school
Dr.Radcliffe's CofE Primary School
Steeple Aston

Type of school (Infant, Primary, Middle, Secondary etc)	Primary
Status (VA, VC or Foundation, CTC or Academy)	VA
LEA	Oxford
Date of inspection	10.5.2007
Date of last inspection	5.11.2001
School's Unique reference number	123210
Name of Headteacher	Mrs. P. Heptonstall
Name of Chair of Governors	Mrs. L. Boote
Inspector's name and NS inspector's number	Mrs. P.R.Parry, 296

Context

Dr. Radcliffe's school was established in 1640 by the Radcliffe Trust which still supports it today. The present school was opened in 1986 and is situated at the perimeter of the village of Steeple Aston close by the church. It is predominantly a white, middle-class catchment area. There are 191 pupils on the roll, 3 from ethnic minorities, 1 with a Statement of Special Needs, and a number with above-average attainment.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Dr.Radcliffe's School as a Church of England school are outstanding

This is an outstanding church school where Christian values and principles are at the centre of every aspect of school life and give a distinctive and inclusive ethos.

Established strengths

Pupils' personal development in behaviour and attitude
Dedication and enthusiasm of all members of staff
Close links with the church
Commitment and support of the governing body and parents.

Focus for development

Replace the existing 'aims' and motto of the school with a short, succinct Mission Statement and include it in the brochure.
Take forward the process of evaluating pupils' responses to Collective Worship and Religious Education.

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

It is apparent when talking and listening to members of the community who are involved in the day to day running of the school, there is a vibrant and well established Christian ethos that underpins all decisions and activities. The overall impression is that everyone in school does their very best at all times. Pupils are exceptionally well behaved and attentive in class and care for each other's needs. One class has a 'friendship tree' where pupils have attached a leaf on which they have written their intended behaviour to class members and attention is frequently referred back to it. Each class discusses and writes out its Code of Conduct at the beginning of the year and any deviation is quickly dealt with. A cross stands on a table at the entrance to the hall, and a lectern with an open Bible, and pupils say that this reminds them they are a church school. Grace is said at meal times, and there is an opportunity for quiet reflection and a prayer at the end of the day. Pupils value this: 'it gives you time to think about what you have done' was one comment. When a member of staff visited Africa and told the pupils of the poverty there, they collected money to help. Members of the village are invited to any acts of worship, in the school or church, and all say this strengthens the sense of community. Major festivals are celebrated in church, also Founders Day, and a Flag Ceremony with prayers at the beginning and end of each term and pupils regard these as highlights of the year. They participate in the Comenius project to extend their cultural awareness, and support a number of charities. They are articulate in discussing the needs of the world.

The impact of collective worship on the school is outstanding

School worship takes place at the beginning of each day, and is well planned by the Head and Incumbent at the beginning of each term. The Incumbent conducts Worship on a regular basis, and this is much appreciated by the learners. Music is an important feature of the school, and pupils sang with enthusiasm. Some related later their favourite songs/hymns and said why they enjoyed them. Members of Year 6 were responsible for planning and conducting part of the Worship observed and did it with great skill, making visual aids and saying what they meant. 'The Grace' was the Bible memory verse for the week and a time for quiet reflection was given after repeating it. When asked later what were her thoughts during this time, one learner said she imagined a circle of people holding hands, with God in the middle. Other opportunities are given for prayer and quiet reflection during the day and learners accept this spiritual aspect as part of everyday life. One pupil said how quiet times helped her when she was worried. Formal evaluation of pupils' responses to Collective Worship is at an early stage of development.

The effectiveness of religious education is outstanding

RE is a very important part of the school curriculum and pupils enjoy it, not least because it is well planned and teaching is imaginative, varied and inspiring. As learners progress through school their achievements far excel the national average: Year 6 are all working at, or have achieved, Level 4, and 72% are at Level 5. Standards in RE are in keeping with those in other subjects which were judged as outstanding by OFSTED. The subject integrates with other subjects in the curriculum, such as English and history, and ICT is used to great advantage for teaching and for learners' own work. Learners in Class 1 acted out the drama of The Great Feast with real meaning, but one admitted later he would never have refused an invitation to a party! Year 3 were exploring Buddhism, and related how and why Wesak was celebrated, highlighting the most significant parts and what each meant to the worshipper. Every year one class visits a place of worship of a different faith and details of a mosque were discussed with some pupils and how it differed from a church. Christianity is included in each year syllabus. Wall displays are in all classrooms, in some cases with artefacts. Learners spoke with understanding about these. One learner said it was important to learn about other peoples' Faiths, because 'when you grow up you have to work with different people'. The subject contributes greatly to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the learners, and they are sympathetic and understanding of other peoples' beliefs. However, formal evaluation of learners' responses to RE has not taken place.

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

There is a real sense of joy in this school of working and achieving together. This in no small way is due to the dedication and commitment of the Head, fully supported by her deputy and all members of the staff. All count it a privilege to work here. This is shown by the number of after-school clubs run by members of the staff (together with parents), sporting activities, and various competitions entered in the county. The school is well equipped, well maintained and well organized. The Chair of Governors, recently appointed, is enthusiastic and fully supports the Head, along with the foundation governors, incumbent and other members of the governing body who all take their duties seriously. The School Development Plan shows the school continues to strive for improvement on an already excellent record. Governing Body meetings are opened with prayers, and when appointments are made, consideration is given to the Christian attitude of applicants. In the entrance hall is displayed the school prayer, a list of school aims together with a brief motto, but no actual Mission Statement exists. All staff, governors, pupils, parents and prospective parents need to be continually reminded of what the school is about.