

**Shustoke Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Forge Road,  
Shustoke,  
Birmingham  
B46 2AU

**Diocese: Birmingham**

Local authority: Warwickshire

Date of inspection: 28 November 2011

Date of last inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> November 2006

School's unique reference number: 125684

Headteacher: Michele Wall

Inspector's name and number: Ian Carnell (Inspector number. 602)

**School context**

This school of 168 pupils is located in a rural setting serving the village of Shustoke and neighbouring villages and farmsteads. The church is approximately a mile away from the school, along country roads with no footpaths. The vicar has four churches under her care. The vast majority of the pupils are White British and the proportion of them with special educational needs is about average.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Shustoke CE Primary as a Church of England school are good**

Shustoke CE is a good school with strengths in many areas. Great care is taken by all the staff to develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural values. It is a happy and lively community with pupils who are well behaved, enjoy learning and feel that their views are taken seriously. There are high expectations of staff and pupils and these are fully promoted throughout the school.

**Established strengths**

- The great confidence of the children to articulate their faith and who live by the core values of the school.
- The very caring and visionary head teacher and staff who, with the excellent support of the Vicar, are united in their efforts to strengthen the school as a vibrant Christian community.
- A strong school ethos based on clear Christian values and teaching, resulting in a high standard of behaviour and care for one another.

**Focus for development**

- Make greater use of the school's external environment and publications such as the prospectus and newsletter to celebrate the school's Anglican foundation and principles in the local community.
- Involve the pupils to a greater extent in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship.
- Establish a systematic approach to reviewing and celebrating the church school distinctiveness that involves the church, school and local community.

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

The strong and caring Christian ethos at Shustoke School ensures that all members are valued and their individual needs seen as a priority. There is a high level of mutual respect that can be seen in the relationships that exist between all members of the school and the excellent role models staff provide for pupils are soundly based on Christian values. Parents

speaking very warmly of its high standards of behaviour, expectation and educational achievement. One parent stated, "Our Christian faith at home is fully reflected at this school." Pupils feel valued and state, "Everybody's equal here and everybody gets special treatment." They are proud of their school and have a strong sense of right and wrong, knowing the consequences of their actions for themselves and for others. Lists of shared Christian values, devised by the school community, are displayed around the school and on the website. These include those of honesty, caring, equality and forgiveness. Pupils refer to the significance of this list, recognising that they were instrumental in the choice of these values. RE makes a very good contribution to spiritual and moral development, with its emphasis on relating what pupils study about different religions to their own lives. Their social and cultural development is strengthened by meaningful links with a partner school in a multi-cultural area of Birmingham and a school in Malawi. Visits to and from the Birmingham school and written communications help them to empathise more fully with the needs and lifestyle of other pupils. The children are involved in decision-making through the School Council and the Eco Council and examples of the results of this pupil voice are seen in the provision of book boxes for lunchtime reading and their tending of the school's allotment. Explicit signs and symbols to celebrate the school's Christian foundation are very apparent in the classrooms, hall and entrance area, and the pupils explain that these help to enhance their spiritual development, particularly in the classroom when they say their prayers. It would be beneficial if more examples were displayed on the exterior of the school and in school publications.

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

The daily act of collective worship is central to the life of the school and is mainly based on the Christian gospel, supplemented with suitable stories from other sources, including the SEAL materials. The vicar, affectionately known as Rev Di, was observed leading a very meaningful act of worship on preparing for Advent during which pupils eagerly responded to questions about looking forward to important events. This was well illustrated when the children helped to portray the story of Noah when he was preparing to react to God's instructions, despite the mockery of his neighbours. The pupils responded well with reverence and a thoughtful attitude to the worship, which culminated in a hymn "You are my Brother" sung by all whilst clasping each other's hands. When questioned, the children showed great enthusiasm for the worship they experience, one pupil stating, "When Rev Di has led worship, children all want to talk about what she has told us." They are keen to talk about all the various acts of worship and prayers that they experience at the school, especially the "humorous and interactive ones!" The school's own prayer, which makes explicit their core values, has been written by pupils and staff, in consultation with the vicar and is displayed widely around the building. The pupils comment that they enjoy the opportunities provided for their active participation in the worship and would like to do it even more often. Teaching staff attend some of the acts of worship each week and lead it at different times, enabling the pupils to realise that adults also recognise the importance of this special time in the school day. There are also occasional opportunities to experience worship in the parish church, particularly at times of Christian festivals, and this is much valued by the pupils. One child stated, "The church visit gives us a special time to reflect, pray and worship God." The school is now preparing to implement a greater degree of planning, leading and evaluation of worship by pupils.

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

The headteacher is providing strong leadership and, together with a strong team of very committed staff, is helping to provide a distinctly Christian ethos combined with a very good quality of education. The head teacher's evaluation of the school is most accurate and rigorous and this is certainly leading to the very effective development of the school's Christian culture. The teacher who leads the provision of RE and Worship throughout the school is most effective in his role and displays good commitment, enthusiasm and an extensive knowledge of the subject area. Parents all speak highly of the school and its leadership and value the opportunities provided to give their views and to attend some of the acts of worship. They commend the headteacher's thoughtful attitude and describe the school as "a very caring family." There is good contact between the parish church and school, including one church member who regularly visits the school to play the piano. The vicar is

most active in her role as a Foundation Governor and is a regular visitor, giving support in collective worship, visiting classrooms and providing help and advice to pupils, parents and staff. She and the head teacher are keen to strengthen the Anglican school ethos with the setting up of regular meetings involving the church, school and local community in order that all may share this vision. The children recognise that they are part of this larger community for which they display a good deal of care and concern, holding regular events throughout the year. For example the children help to organise a village Remembrance Service on 11<sup>th</sup> November each year and this year held a Cancer Awareness Coffee Morning in memory of their former head teacher. This active community involvement combined with the strong leadership found at Shustoke Primary as a Christian school is much appreciated by the parents, leading one to declare, "I couldn't have chosen a better school for my child!"

SIAS report November 2011 Shustoke CE VC Primary School Birmingham B46 2AU