



**Shenington Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School**  
**Stocking Lane**  
**Shenington**  
**Banbury OX15 6NF**



Type of school (Infant, Primary, Middle, Secondary etc)	Primary
Status (VA, VC or Foundation, CTC or Academy)	Voluntary Aided
Diocese	<b>Oxford</b>
Local Authority	25 June 2008
Date of inspection	Oxfordshire
Date of last inspection	July 2002
School's Unique reference number	123273
Name of Headteacher	Mrs Frances Brown
Name of Chair of Governors	Lady Alison Pollard
Inspector's name and NS inspector's number	Mari Powell 143

### Context

Shenington school is very well located in the beautiful countryside north of Banbury. The school is housed in an attractive fairly new building. Parents are very involved in the activities of the school and have high aspirations for its impact upon their children.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Shenington as a Church of England school are outstanding

The headteacher, staff and governors have a very clear vision of the school as an inclusive, vibrant church of England school. Very strong relationships and a culture of outstanding mutual respect and support underpin the work of the school.

### Established strengths

- Excellent relationships which have a very beneficial effect on pupils' learning.
- The challenge and support of the governors which ensure the continuing development of the school.
- The leadership of the headteacher and dedication of the staff in raising the self-esteem and aspirations of all the pupils.

### Focus for development

- Support the continuing development of worship by more formally evaluating and recording activities which have an outstanding impact on the pupils' spiritual development.
- Seek opportunities for older pupils, in particular, to use their good writing skills to extend their recording of work in religious education.

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

The school has a very well developed understanding of how to reflect its Christian foundation through its practice. This vision is very effectively supported and communicated by the headteacher, staff and governors. The excellent relationship which exists between the headteacher, teaching staff and children as well as the governors, lies at the heart of the very distinctive ethos which permeates school life. Discussion with parents revealed their recognition, as well as their appreciation of the values promoted within the school. Pupils develop a high level of self-esteem as well as a very marked concern and respect for their peers, and for all who support their learning. Arrangements for play at break and lunch time are conducive to promoting very good relationships between older and younger pupils. Pupils of all ages positively welcome taking responsibility for a variety of aspects of school life from producing plans for the development and care of the school grounds to a proposal for older pupils to hold a teaching session for the younger children. An excellent display of recent work on Tanzania, linked to the impending visit to the area of a Tanzanian bishop reflects the children's interest in the people, culture and economy of that region. Equally, they have a high level of awareness of their own locality, its history and of the lives of people of different generations who live in it. Pupils are proud of their learning environment. Their work to enhance it, together with their well-executed recording of it through the medium of art, reflects a spiritual awareness of their relationship with it.

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

In addition to the reflective, careful planning of daily acts of worship, elements of worship permeate many

aspects of the life of the school. This provides pupils with well rounded, holistic experiences to enhance the spiritual aspect of their lives and also develops their moral understanding. The advent of the new building has provided members of the school with a golden opportunity to reflect their spiritual values, for example, through consultations and decisions about the external environment. A plaque on the external wall near the entrance bears the design of an old oak tree which stands in front of the old building, very near to the church. The pupils perceive this to be a reminder of worship in the old building and links it to that which takes place in the new school. The Rector is a regular, valued presence in the school as are other representatives of the church who lead and support school worship within school and in the church. Pupils' views of worship have been gathered, with the result that current plans and practice reflect their desire to be actively involved, for example, in role play, leading prayers and making decisions about themes and content of worship. Acts of worship reflect very well Anglican traditions and the liturgical calendar. However, the school has a strong commitment to inclusion and also to drawing upon pupils' learning about worship in other faiths. On occasions, festivals associated with the Jewish and Hindu faiths have been celebrated, thereby broadening the pupils' understanding and sensitivity towards the beliefs and traditions of other major world faiths. Pupils have a very good understanding of the place of prayer and reflection as a common strand in the experience of worship. The planning of worship reflects variety, and ensures that it meets the needs of learners of different ages. The school reflects on its worship practice but does not currently record the impact of worship in a way which could be used to inform continuing outstanding practice.

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

Religious education is viewed as an important element of pupils' learning in a school which has a Christian foundation. The quality of teaching is good and engages the pupils' interest. A strong feature of the teaching is the way teachers' questioning skills inspire pupils to reflect and in turn, ask important questions themselves. As a result, pupils enjoy discussion and are developing a vocabulary to deal with spiritual and moral issues. The older pupils are gaining a good level of confidence for sharing their views as they work collaboratively. The subject coordinator has good subject knowledge and supports other teachers effectively. The younger pupils are familiar with a range of Old Testament stories and can relate their meaning to their own experience. This was well illustrated during a role play activity which followed a very dynamic narration of the story of David and Goliath. Older pupils currently show a high level of interest in the features of Buddhism, for example, the concept of "enlightenment". They have a clear recognition that different religions lead different people along different paths but nevertheless have elements in common. Discussion during the lesson showed that pupils are using their religious vocabulary to explore values such as respect and tolerance through their studies in religious education. Assessment practices are improving with the result that pupils are gaining a clearer understanding of how they are doing. Work in religious education is conscientiously recorded, sometimes through work in art. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to engage in more extended work which might reflect more effectively the depth of their knowledge and understanding.

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

The school has maintained its strong tradition of dedicated, highly effective leadership and management of the school as a church school. The headteacher and governors provide excellent leadership for the personal development of the pupils and consistently demonstrate the value they place on each individual child. The teachers and learning support assistants, in their dedication to raising pupils' achievement as well as their all round growth as human beings, make an important contribution to promoting the stated aims and values of the school. A statement in the school prospectus emphasises the school's commitment to promoting Christian principles. As a result, pupils develop attitudes of respect and are impressively caring and considerate towards each other. Together, the governors and staff have created a highly appropriate Development Plan which includes important areas such as worship and teaching and learning in religious education. Key policies, such as that for behaviour and inclusion are regularly reviewed and increasingly reflect the views of parents and pupils. The coordinator for religious education keeps up to date with new developments and ensures that other teachers are well supported and have access to training. She also collaborates very appropriately with the headteacher and Rector to plan aspects of worship. The school values support from parents and enables their views to be heard. Local school partnerships, including one which brings church school leaders together are also valued. The Diocesan officers provide very good advice and training opportunities for staff and also sensitive pastoral support when the need arises. This relationship between the school and the church was particularly valued during a recent event which caused great sadness in school. It is very evident that the Rector and foundation governors were a source of immense comfort and support for staff and pupils. Overall, the leadership and management of the school are highly effective in maintaining and developing the school as a distinctive, effective and inclusive church school.

