

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools

### Report

School:	<b>Combe Down Church of England Primary School, Summer Lane, Combe Down, BATH BA2 5JX</b>
Status:	<b>Voluntary Controlled</b>
Diocese:	<b>Bath &amp; Wells</b>
Local Authority:	<b>Bath &amp; North East Somerset</b>
Date of Inspection:	<b>16<sup>th</sup> September, 2010</b>
Date of last Inspection:	<b>23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2007</b>
School's unique ref. no.	<b>109230</b>
Name of Head teacher:	<b>Mr. Richard Bullard</b>
Chair of Governors:	<b>Mrs. Karen Coates</b>
Inspector's name & NS no:	<b>Mr Mike Tedstone 643</b>

### School context

Combe Down Church of England Primary School is a primary school with 409 pupils on roll, in the village of Combe Down, a suburb on the south side of Bath. It is a popular school and is oversubscribed. The buildings are an interesting mix: a log cabin, a modern hall and classroom block and modernised old school buildings. All this is on a wooded site adjacent to the parish church of Holy Trinity. Parts of the site have been developed to provide areas for quieter play and reflection.

### Summary Judgement

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Combe Down Church of England Primary School as a church school are good.**

Combe Down Church of England School is an excellent church school where everyone is welcome within its strong Christian environment. This is a caring, nurturing school where all relationships are highly valued, with a sound Christian ethos. Within this ethos all pupils flourish and make excellent progress.

## **Established Strengths**

- The commitment of everyone to the spiritual and personal development of each pupil
- The outstanding quality of collective worship and its impact on the whole school community
- The exceptional behaviour of all the pupils, with a high degree of respect and politeness shown to others

## **Focus for development**

- Ensure that the school's Christian values and ethos are promoted in all school documentation
- Set up a system of regular monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the school as a church school
- Enable the Religious Education (RE) subject leader to monitor lessons and work with staff to assess and moderate work, using the outcomes to inform teaching and learning

## **The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding in the way it meets the needs of all learners**

Combe Down has created an ethos based on the Christian values of trust, compassion, friendship and hope. The distinctive Christian character is recognised by staff, children, parents and governors, each feeling highly valued and, as a result, everyone feels secure and happy and the pupils are very well behaved. They are proud of their school, especially the caring family atmosphere; they value the importance of being listened to by staff and knowing that their opinions matter. In its beautiful woodland setting, the school environment provides excellent opportunities for pupils to care for and reflect on the beauty of creation. Adults in the school have very open and supportive relationships with one another and this is reflected in their interaction with the pupils. The latest Ofsted report comments very positively on the school's care and support for all pupils and notes the strong pastoral care. The presence of workers from Holy Trinity Church and the Union Chapel has a positive impact on the life of the school and its pupils. Parents say that it is important that it is a church school. One parent said that there is always a 'buzzing' in the playground and that people all look out for each other. They also say that the parents' prayer group and the importance of prayer throughout the school day is an invaluable aspect of the school. Indeed, one parent said she was very impressed on a recent school trip when grace was said before the children had their picnic lunch. At the present time there is a pupil who is very poorly and a group of parents are meeting off site to pray for him and his family. The pupils know that they are special and created in God's image; one said that there are lots of Christians in the school. Another told me that you see God in everybody, "especially when someone is nice and kind to me". Yet another summed up things wonderfully by saying "Some think that school is all about learning and stuff, but I know that it's more than that". The children know that they, the pupils, are special and respected by all staff and really appreciate the way in which this is recognised.

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

Worship is central to the life of the school and is truly inclusive with all members of the school community participating. It affirms and celebrates all that everyone values and sees as worthwhile. It is living, dynamic and spiritually uplifting. The children are always engaged during worship. On the day of the inspection it was led by the Headteacher with help and

support from the Year 6 children who welcomed everyone in and operated the technology. A lit candle created a focal point on the worship table at the front of the hall and everyone entered the hall very quietly for which they were thanked by the Headteacher who told them that it made him feel good. There is obvious enjoyment and enthusiasm for this important aspect of the school day and the children's attitudes are extremely positive. They delight in their involvement; one said that although it can be a tight fit, it is good to see everyone else there. They said that it was a time to speak with God and they enjoy the quiet time and the singing. Worship is comprehensively planned with an overview showing both the themes and leaders, providing variety and a systematic approach. A log of worship is kept and the children's thoughts and feelings are collected on a monitoring sheet, to ensure development and monitor the impact of the worship. The impact on the school community is impressive – the weekly theme of Creation was taken up in the excellent RE lesson observed and by the children in our discussion; one of the children commented on the view of the trees from the window, saying that the colours are always changing as part of God's creation. Peace and prayer extend beyond the daily acts of worship with prayer being said at lunch time and at the end of each day. Worship regularly takes place in Holy Trinity Church especially at the major Christian festivals, giving pupils experience of Anglican faith and practice. Members of the church and the Union Chapel lead worship each week, and governors are part of the Friday Acts of Worship, widening pupils experience of the Christian church. Each year on Remembrance Day the year 6 children go to the service in church and then they are joined by the Year 5's to place a wreath on the village War Memorial.

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

Combe Down is a very popular church school which enjoys the support of its parents and is held in very high regard within the local community in which it is totally involved. The headteacher gives inspirational leadership to all those around him, setting high professional standards and working very closely with parents, governors and local clergy. He leads the whole school community in the most caring way, valuing everyone as unique individuals. The RE teaching and learning in the school is developing well and the subject leader is clear about the way in which she wishes it to move forward. She maintains good resource folders which contain examples of work from across the school. She now needs to monitor lessons and work with staff to assess and moderate work, using the outcomes to inform teaching and learning. The governors are well led and fully understand their roles and responsibilities for the school as a church school, both challenging and supporting with sensitivity and discretion. In April there was a Vision Day when all those involved in the life of the school looked at what it means to be a church school; and in the School Development Plan there is a focus on increasing links with the church and looking at church involvement in the school. The Children's worker from Holy Trinity, who works regularly in the school, said that the relationship between church and school is going from strength to strength. Communications are very strong and regular opportunities are afforded to learners and their parents to share their feelings and views. Comments are listened to, valued and respected. The very obvious Christian ethos needs to be highlighted in all documentation especially in the School Evaluation Form and there needs to be regular monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the school as a church school. There is a real family atmosphere in the school and this is due to everyone working closely together in a committed Christian environment.

*This inspection was carried out on behalf of the Diocese of Bath & Wells in whose area the school is set, in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection framework used is that established by The National Society of the Church of England for the denominational inspection of church schools for all dioceses in England and Wales.*

*Your comments or complaints should be addressed to the Education Department, The Diocese of Bath & Wells, The Old Deanery, Wells, Somerset BA5 2UG. Further information about inspection of church schools can be obtained from the National Society's website at [www.natsoc.org.uk](http://www.natsoc.org.uk).*