



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools
Under Section 48 of the Education Act 2006

Diocese of Leicester

Leicestershire Local Authority

St Denys Church of England Infant School

Laud Close
Ibstock
Leicestershire
LE67 6NL

Inspection Date: 30th June 2010

Section 48 Inspector: Carole Jefferson (No: 669)

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

School name and address:	St Denys Church of England Infant School Laud Close Ibstock Leicestershire LE67 6NL
Diocese:	Leicester
Local authority:	Leicestershire
Dates of inspection:	30 th June 2010
Date of last inspection:	26 th and 28 th March 2007
School's unique reference no:	120138
Headteacher:	Mrs Jane Sharp
Inspector's name (and no):	Mrs Carole Jefferson (No: 669)

School context

This average sized infant school serves the former mining village of Ibstock. The 166 pupils are mainly from White British backgrounds. The school includes a special unit for ten children with complex learning and physical needs, therefore the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is higher than average.. The decline of local industries means that there are pockets of social deprivation.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Denys Infant school as a Church of England school are good

St Denys has a distinctive character based on the clear Christian vision of the school's leaders. Excellent relationships exist between all sections of the school community. It is an inclusive school which enables all pupils to reach their full potential in both academic and personal development.

Established strengths

- The inclusive nature of the school ensures that all pupils enjoy school and achieve their potential
- The excellent behaviour of the children, modelled by all staff, exemplifying the Christian values of care, respect and love in daily life
- Very strong commitment based on Christian values successfully underpins every aspect of school life
- Well planned collective worship, which inspires and affirms

Focus for development

- Develop the role of governors to include them in the self evaluation of this as a church school
- Through training provided by the diocese, develop staff and governors' awareness of the issues surrounding the distinctive Christian character of the school
- Create a space for members of the school community, especially the pupils, to be able to engage in quiet reflection

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

The firm focus on Christian values permeates very successfully throughout all aspects of daily life at St Denys. Pupils say that 'God is the light of the world' and that 'He has us all in his hands'. Pupils demonstrate great care and support for the needs of others less fortunate than themselves as they speak about their charity work- 'If you've got no house and no food, then someone's got to look after you!' Every pupil, whatever their age, ability, background, or life view is fully included in everything that this very cohesive school has to offer to children and their families. 'Each one of us different, each one of us special', is demonstrated in every aspect of school life. Students encourage each other, for example at the school council a year 2 pupil patiently encouraged very sensitively a child in the special needs unit to answer a question. Parents like the school's approach, which they support wholeheartedly valuing the time and care that the school staff give

them so that the very rare concerns are resolved quickly in the spirit of reconciliation and justice. Parents speak warmly about the gift of bibles, for example one parent said that the school bible is often chosen as a bedtime story book. Relationships are excellent all working closely together for the well-being of the pupils in their care. The calm and peaceful working atmosphere successfully encourages everyone enabling all pupils to thrive and flourish as responsible, independent individuals. Pupils are given responsibility, for example, play coaches who help in the playground at lunchtime and encourage fair play. Children are very willing to share with one another and with adults. Children are taught how to care for and appreciate animals and plants, for example, by hatching chicks and one child who, picking a chive flower, crushed it and said, "Smell this; isn't it lovely". They learn about self sufficiency by growing their own potatoes, vegetables and fruit realising that they are able to contribute towards the work of creation. Attractive displays and artefacts help to create a rich spiritual environment so that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is nurtured extremely well.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Children enjoy contributing to and leading assemblies by making up their own prayers, reading, playing musical instruments and singing. They sing enthusiastically and tunefully. Collective worship is well planned by leaders, using guidance given by the diocese, the church calendar and others to cover age appropriate themes from a range of cultures. The themes are agreed at a staff meeting. Great sensitivity is shown when presenting certain themes that might be difficult for some of the school community such as bereavement. During the week of the inspection, the theme was 'journeys' and the subject was explored by year 1 children who considered their journey through year 1 and on to year 2. The whole school assembly focussed on the story of Gladys Aylward. The children's spirituality was enhanced by the playing of Chinese music and the lighting of a candle, as one child said 'I love the way the candle dances, its beautiful'. Children and staff enter the hall quietly and respectfully and sit facing a lovely wooden cross which was made by a former year 2 boy. Collective worship is central to the life of the school, taking place every day, either as a whole school or in class. The children say grace before lunch and a prayer, chosen as a class, at the end of the day. Children understand that collective worship is a time for quiet reflection 'to be with God' and for listening carefully. All children are included, leaders use Makaton signing so that the children in the special unit can understand. Children are excited by going to special services at St Denys church and the Wesleyan reform church.

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

The head teacher provides strong leadership and has developed a loyal and committed school team. Senior leaders and governors support her in promoting the Christian vision of the school effectively. Recruitment procedures ensure that new staff understand and promote the school's Christian ethos. Children and their families are valued and nurtured, parents "also feel supported". Pupils contribute their views through the school council and feel they play a significant role. St Denys church and Ibstock Wesleyan Reform church give effective prayerful support to the school. Members of both churches are foundation governors. Clergy and foundation governors are firmly committed to all aspects of the work of the school, they are involved in monitoring and evaluating collective worship and attend school functions.. Self evaluation by school staff is carried out effectively and is used to inform further development planning. Governors have not yet been involved in the school's self evaluation as a church school, and they need to be. School leaders and foundation governors are committed to developing all staff to their full potential. A buddy system is in place for new members of staff to assist their induction; whilst formal peer monitoring and evaluation as well as head teacher involvement ensures that the ethos is embedded. Governors are mindful of the importance of succession planning and have already made changes in the school management structure in anticipation of staff changes in the future.