

Bishop's Visitor's Report

Bishop's Visitor: Beverley Butler	
School: Blue Coat C. of E. Primary, Wotton	NOR: 306
AIDED	
Headteacher: Mr. Mark Ryan	RE Subject Lead: Mrs. Jane Blaken
Date of Annual Visit: 27th March 2019	
<p>Purpose of the visit: To provide pastoral support to the school, especially the Headteacher, as appropriate. To foster the link between the school and the Diocese of Gloucester. To encourage and support RE, SMSC, Collective Worship, Values Education and Character Development, by signposting staff to appropriate officers and resources.</p>	

Checklist prior to the visit		Comment or observation
a) Agree time and date of visit with HT	Yes	
b) Agree timetable for the visit	Yes	
c) Access the school's website	Yes	
d) Receive/access and read school newsletters		Have asked admin. to send them
e) Attendance at school events or occasions		
f) Attendance of Bishop at school event or occasion		
g) Changes in leadership at the school since last visit	No	
h) Pastoral support during the year		Just contact with RE Leader on courses

During the visit (possible activities)		Comment or observation
a) Meet with the Headteacher	Yes	
b) Tour of the school		
c) Attend collective worship	Yes	In this case a debate for the whole school
d) Meet with children	Yes	During RE
e) Discussion with leaders for RE, collective worship, SIAMS	Yes	Had chance then and on previous day too at SIAMS course
f) Signposting officers at the DBE		Already aware of these as RE leader is an RE Hub leader
g) Signposting resources, opportunities, training supported by the DBE		Already aware of these
h) Creative links between the school and the church linked to the LIFE vision	Yes	An exciting partnership - becoming ever closer

The information above will be used to inform the letter written to the Headteacher to provide a summary of the visit, comments and observations. It will celebrate the ways in which the school is fostering and developing its distinctive Christian ethos as well as signposting support which has been requested by the Headteacher.

This report and attached letter will be sent to the school within a week of the visit and the letter should be shared with the governors and school community. Copies will also be sent to the Diocese of Gloucester (Education Dept.).

Bishop's Visitor's letter to school

29th March, 2019

Dear Mr. Ryan,

It was uplifting, as always to visit Blue Coat last week and I appreciated the chance to talk to you about current developments and challenges at school, as well as the opportunity to see the contrasting activities taking place during the afternoon.

I was so pleased to hear you have recently won a second National Playwork Award for your outdoor play scheme, reflecting the school's huge commitment to the outdoor space and the opportunities it presents for the children's development in so many areas - not least spirituality. Having seen the wonderfully creative play on a previous visit, it seems inevitable that you are gradually becoming a centre of excellence for this, sharing your experience with other schools and in turn benefiting from ideas gained from them. Your focus on the thinking process in learning also sounds to be overhauling the way children tackle problem-solving and you will no doubt see the long term benefit of this, as it gradually becomes embedded.

Your vision is undoubtedly unique and underpins everything, so it was good to have time to talk briefly about recent changes to the SIAMS Inspection Framework and its implications for the school. It will be useful for you to have these as a focus as you constantly reflect on how and what you offer to the children. This is already apparent in the way you have reviewed Collective Worship and adopted a more cohesive approach to Christian theology and its context – based on the Big Frieze from Understanding Christianity, with God's Love proving a constant, recurring theme.

What a privilege it was to observe the 'Godly Play' workshop run in Mrs. Blaken's RE sessions. Please pass on my thanks to her. It was fascinating to see and hear the children's responses to the story of Mary's life, told by Alison Summerskill. There was a hushed silence, as they listened, totally absorbed and this was reflected in the mature way in which they then chose and proceeded with activities in a range of media, to show their own very personal reflections of the story. It was enlightening to hear the conversation going on and the comments made to me, when I asked if they enjoyed that new experience and also RE ...all were very positive!

It was lovely to see Rev. Morag in school, having spent the previous day on a training course with her and Mrs. Blaken and I know the close partnership between school and church is becoming ever stronger. The Ignite club is thriving and it was so encouraging to see the photos and hear about the recent Sunday service which twenty members of the club led in church, as well as the visit to the Christingle Anniversary Service in the Cathedral. The recent iSing POP was obviously a huge success judging by the children's enthusiastic comments and these are all valuable strands of the rich fabric and ethos of the school.

Finally, I felt very fortunate to witness the Y6 debate in place of worship, in front of the entire school on the motion: 'The world would be a safer place if we had one single, unified religion.' What mature confident and articulate speakers there were in each team! I was very impressed with the way they each presented their argument and then were able to question the other team and provide answers. Time built in for the rest of us to talk about it, before we voted was also useful. It was enlightening to hear their ideas and undoubtedly something to which the younger ones will aspire.

As always my visit to Blue Coat was inspiring: so many varied and valuable experiences are on offer for the children and indeed for the whole community too, with chance for everyone, both young and older, to benefit in so many ways.

Yours sincerely,
Beverley Butler,
Bishop's Visitor