

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Barkston and Syston Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Church Street
Barkston
Grantham
Lincolnshire
NG32 2NB

Diocese: Lincoln

LEA: Lincolnshire

Dates of inspection: Monday 13 & Tuesday 14 March 2006

Date of last inspection: 12,13,14 January 2000

School's Unique reference number: 120689

Name of Headteacher: Mrs S A Caunter

Inspector: Roger Moore

School context

Barkston and Syston Church of England Aided Primary School is a smaller than average Primary School. The school prides itself on a supportive family atmosphere and is central to the life of the village. The school is the guardianship school for the National Trust property Belton House. Many children travel to school by bus or by car. The children's backgrounds are diverse. There are strong links with the church.

Summary Judgement

The school's distinctiveness and effectiveness as a Church of England School is good.

Established strengths

- A daily act of Christian worship, and regular religious teaching about the Anglican faith alongside the agreed syllabus.
- The strong, secure and safe Christian ethos that permeates throughout the school.
- A well established partnership with parents, the church and local community.
- Positive diocesan and parish links. The church has strong links with the school; Harvest, Christmas, Christingle, an Easter Communion and Leaver's service all take place in the church.
- Pupils feel valued. There is no evidence of bullying or aggressive behaviour.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good
- Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and have access to a growing number of extra-curricular activities.
- The Bishop's visitor is a regular visitor to the school, helping in the reception class and occasionally leading assemblies

Focus for development

- To successfully introduce and implement the new Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus from September 2006. The school will need to consider how they will provide the regular religious teaching about the Anglican faith when the services of the Rector are no longer available.
- Collective Worship is identified by the school for review in 2006. It will be helpful to consider how Collective Worship becomes a time when the whole school; staff and pupils, come together for worship.
- Consider how the recently introduced School Council can build on the platform created in order to continue to provide an effective voice for the pupils

How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?

The school through its distinctive Christian character makes good provision for all its learners. All learners in this school are valued and this is rooted in a strong Christian commitment from staff, governors and parents. The school succeeds as a caring Christian community by placing much importance upon the relationships necessary for effective learning. As a result, staff and pupils work well together for the benefit of

all by creating an obvious, caring atmosphere. Esteem is raised through praise. The children care about their school and volunteer to carry out a range of activities around the school. The behaviour and attitudes to learning of the pupils is good.

The curriculum is broadened by this school's commitment to the study of and links with other faiths and cultures. The school led a very successful India Day; a recent visit by an African Pastor is helping to develop the children's views of other cultures. The children sponsor an African child's education and receive regular updates about her lifestyle.

Pupils are encouraged to achieve their potential. The recently introduced reward system allows children to achieve and have their successes celebrated. The School Council is becoming an effective voice for the pupils. They have raised money to buy equipment and books and are currently working on developing a 'buddy system'. They are about to purchase a 'Buddy Bus Stop' from their funds for use in the playground,

Observations and discussions made it apparent that everyone met during the inspection felt valued, appreciated and supported. School questionnaires to pupils and adults support this view.

Good role models are set within the school community with the headteacher and staff setting the example with their high standard of care and respect for each other and the students.

What is the impact of Collective Worship on the school community?

Overall the provision and impact of collective worship on the school community is good. The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.

Worship is well planned and led by the headteacher, staff, the Rector and occasionally the Bishop's Visitor.

Planning follows the Church's Year, thus confirming the school's Anglican status. The atmosphere observed during Worship was one of calmness, with singing and collective prayer being good. The atmosphere is well served by suitable focal points; the table, candle and banners provide an appropriate backcloth for collective worship.

There is currently no evaluation of the impact Worship has on the school community and all staff do not always attend, thus not always affirming the whole community nature of Worship.

The Acts of Worship contribute positively to the spiritual, social moral and cultural development of the children by their content and atmosphere.

The children say that they like sitting in a horseshoe shape. They like assemblies where they are actively involved. They enjoy going to the church. Older children take a part in organizing the music, lighting the candle and ensuring the hall is ready for collective worship each day. This provision enables Collective worship to be an important part of the day and signifies the importance to the school of its arrangements for Collective Worship and visits to the church for special services.

A hymn is sung during each act of worship. Hymn singing is practiced once a week. The headteacher leads a weekly awards assembly. The use of appropriate hymns and the choice of music at the beginning and end of the worship enhances the quality of the occasion.

Times for reflection are built into the school day. Prayers are said at lunchtime and before the children go home at the end of the day. The outside tables and the pond area provide a focus for the children to stand quietly and reflect. There are many

posters around the school which are liked by the children. They feel that the range of reflective posters around the school help them to understand what they should do. This underlines the importance of prayer and reflection in the daily life of the school

How effective is the Religious Education in the school?

Religious Education in the school is good. Religious Education is recognised by governors and staff as being of particular importance in a church school. The school follows the Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education which allows the children to learn about other faiths as well as the Christian Faith. Religious Education is taught as a discrete subject following a two-year rolling programme.

Pupils have a good knowledge of Christianity and other faiths. The quality of teaching and learning is good; pupils' attitudes are positive and their interest is stimulated by enthusiastic and knowledgeable teaching.

The subject is well-resourced. Topic boxes have been organized and provided by the Religious Education Co-ordinator. Displays around the school and in each classroom are good.

Scrutiny of work, development of assessment and monitoring of teaching and learning are all included in the development of the subject leaders' role, which is identified as a priority for development in the Single School Plan. There are plans in place to introduce and implement the new Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus from the beginning of September 2006.

How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?

Overall, leadership and management of the school as a church school are good. Leadership and management of the school as a church school are good.

The school prides itself on providing a supportive family atmosphere within a caring Christian ethos. Christianity lies at the heart of its purpose and this stems from its leaders.

There are strong links with the church. The school welcomes these links by holding services at the church during the course of the year; Harvest, Christingle, Christmas and an Easter Communion service are held.

The diocese provides good support to the school. Help, support, guidance and training are accessed by staff and governors.

Governors' meetings are focused at the beginning with a prayer, usually led by the Rector.

The School council is enabling the children to have a voice in helping the school to make better provision.

Stakeholders' views are sought through staff meetings, governors' meetings and parent and pupil questionnaires. The school is aware of the issues raised and has acted on them.

Religious Education and Collective Worship are led effectively by the co-ordinator. The school has identified the need to develop further the skills and expertise of all subject leaders as part of the Single School plan priorities for this year.