

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Caistor Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

South Dale

Caistor

Lincoln

LN7 6LY

Diocese: Lincoln

LA: North East Lincolnshire

Dates of inspection: 17th and 19th. May 2006

Date of last inspection: March 2000

School's Unique reference number: 120590

Headteacher: Mr N.A.McCann

Inspector's name and number: Mr. C. Turner

School context

This is an average sized Primary school, one of five supported jointly by the Church of England and Methodist Church in the region. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups.

Summary Judgement

This is an outstanding joint Anglican/Methodist Primary school. The staff provide a rich and varied curriculum, and a very wide range of extra activities, for all the pupils, developing individual skills and talents fully. The excellent personal relationships built up and maintained over the years, make the school a very good place for learning, teaching and developing for all its members. This is the result of a sense of vocation and practical Christian faith shared in varying degrees by the staff.

The joint character of the school also involves links with the local Roman Catholic congregation. The pupils are very involved in the life of the town and beyond, and have an enthusiasm for supporting good causes, encouraged by the staff and governors. These two factors create a potent force for unity within the community.

Established strengths

- The continuing development of the Christian character of the school. This has an outstanding impact on relationships and behaviour within the school, and raises standards.
- The breadth and richness of the curriculum and out of class activities, especially music. This benefits the personal development of the pupils and is a gift to the community of Caistor.
- The exceeding high quality of relationships brought about by the vision of the school leaders and its careful and thoughtful adoption by all the staff.

Focus for development

- To extend the best practice in personal spiritual development to all classes, especially the wider adoption of an end of the day short period of reflection or prayer.
- To develop ways in which the Christian character of the school can be made more overt and clearly recognizable to the school's parents, friends and visitors.

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

This is very good with many outstanding features. The pupils agree with the assessment made by one of them, "This school is good because we all like each other, and that goes for the teachers too" Consequently all the pupils, to an outstanding degree, whatever their skills or talents feel cared for, valued and challenged to achieve as well as they can. The school's Christian ethos ensures that they feel special. The management team of the school is looking for ways of making this more overt without losing its spontaneity. Very significant is the extra-curricular club in art specifically for invited pupils with identified special needs.

The pupils interviewed recognised the very useful positive links with the Churches in Caistor. The parents were pleased with the success of the school, and how much

their children enjoyed attending. The style of teaching with careful and precise record keeping ensures that individual pupils are very well aware of their achievement in most subjects.

The inclusive and affirming Christian ethos of the school allows the personal spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of the pupils to flourish exceedingly well. It is clear that the excellent relationships within the school are soundly based on a Christian model. Changes in the wording of school policies, resulting from discussions in the school about the school's Christian character, are being prepared to make this link clearer. Both indoors and outside the school successfully provides very good areas and opportunities for stimulation, energetic play and quiet reflection, such as the pupil-planned sensory garden being created in the grounds. These are used well, appreciated by the pupils and support the good pupil behaviour. The display in the school is excellent in its presentation and is varied and challenging. As a result pupils' learning continues outside lessons, and they develop a proper pride in their school.

What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?

Collective worship is very well planned, very carefully delivered and involves the pupils fully. As a result its impact on the school is outstanding. The teachers and support staff regularly participate in the worship, providing very good models for the pupils. The whole school approach to collective worship is both a product of the school's outstanding Christian ethos and a means of maintaining it.

The children enjoy the experience of worship and take it seriously. The Year 6 class assembly on Christian Aid was outstanding because the pupils were fully involved in its planning and delivery. The quality of singing was very high and all the people involved approached the theme with concern and reverence. The use of an African song significantly added to the pupils' cultural development. Parents regularly attend worship, looking forward to the experience. It is clearly a central event in the school day for the whole school community. The pupils enter with an air of expectation and they are not disappointed. The two clergy associated with the school regularly lead worship, along with other guests.

In a number of classes the school day also ends with prayer or a time of reflection during which the day is reviewed by each child. The school is wisely extending this as it plays an important role in the promotion of the school's excellent ethos and the pupils' spiritual development.

Although the school is overwhelmingly white, British and Christian, the breadth of styles of worship and the importance given to meeting individuals' varying faith traditions helps to prepare the pupils for the variety of religious beliefs and practices they will meet in the adult world.

The two Christian communities that support this school, Anglican and Methodist have an input into collective worship and pupils are made aware, through visits to churches of the similarities and the differences in practice between them and of the faith which unites them.

How effective is the religious education?

Though not the subject of an evaluative report, the religious education provided in this Controlled school is very soundly based on the Local Authority Agreed Syllabus. It is very well prepared, very well delivered and as a consequence, the standards achieved are good, and the pupils' knowledge, understanding and personal development is very good indeed. This high quality is achieved by a co-ordinator, who sees the task as a vocation rather than just a job. Great care is taken that pupils should meet with adherents of faiths other than Christianity through twinning with a school in mixed community in Scunthorpe. The quality of work produced for religious education is high because the subject is very carefully planned, good pupil records are kept and the pupils enjoy learning the subject. The resources used are good. The co-ordinator and staff make very good use of Diocesan support to improve their professional skills in the subject.

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

The leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding. The head teacher is fully committed to creating an excellent school and successfully encourages all his colleagues to share in that vision. He is an enabler who is very ready to support the ideas of his very creative staff. The Governing Body is knowledgeable about their school and aware of all its good features and also of what needs to be improved further. To this end governors are beginning to adopt particular subjects or areas of responsibility. The very active clerical and foundation governors are well supported by the rest of the governing body in maintaining the outstanding Christian ethos of the school which was a major item in the current school improvement plan. An outcome of the attention paid to this focus is that the Christian ethos is being introduced into the life of the school with some benefits already occurring and others yet to mature. The links with the churches and the local community are more than token gestures and are very important in promoting and maintaining the Christian care and service in the character of the school

The management of the school is very collaborative and consultative. Staff, parents and pupils acknowledge that their opinions are canvassed and used in arriving at solutions. Staff educational passions are welcomed, while dialogue and debate are important features of the outstanding professional relationships existing within the school.

May 2006 SIAS report Caistor Church of England and Methodist Primary School South Dale Caistor Lincoln LN7 6LY