

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### Little Gonerby Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Sandon Road  
Grantham  
Lincolnshire  
NG31 9AZ

**Diocese: Lincoln**

LA: Lincolnshire

Dates of inspection: 23rd and 27th. June 2006

Date of last inspection: 3rd.-6th.April 2000

School's Unique reference number: 3rd.-6th.April 2000

Headteacher: Mrs. E.A.Wiggins

Inspector's name and number: Rev'd. John Pryor 184

#### School context

This is a popular Infant School with some 178 pupils on role. It has a good reputation locally and has strong connections with an equally popular Church of England Junior School. The grounds are spacious and the buildings relatively new and in very good order. The vast majority of children are from a white British background.

#### Summary Judgement

This is a good school with many outstanding features. It wears its Voluntary Aided Church of England status with pride. The school's Christian character is clear in its published documents, displays around the school and the cross present in each classroom. Collective worship and prayers that take place during the day together with the teaching of religious education are taken very seriously and have a very positive impact on the pupils' spiritual growth and understanding and on their personal development. The care and welfare of the pupils, based on the shared acceptance of Christian values, is exemplary and meets parents' expectations, though they do not always recognise the Christian basis of these values and the care that flows from them.

#### Established strengths

- The school provides a very safe physical and emotional environment that underpins the good relationships and outstanding care, welfare and support for the pupils.
- Good quality collective worship in which the singing is outstanding and inspiring.
- High standards are promoted and maintained in religious education.
- The school is well led and managed.

#### Focus for development

- To continue developing simple and effective ways to assess and monitor the pupils' understanding of religious education.
- To seek ways to make collective worship available for all members of the school community from time to time.

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

This aspect of the school's life is good. The good quality teaching and support motivate all pupils, to work very hard and to learn and develop skills, whatever their level of initial achievement, results in good standards of academic achievement and good behaviour both inside and outside of the classroom. The school's enviable reputation with the parents and within the town is based on its underlying Christian values. Parents generally do not recognise this when commending the school's achievements but clearly welcome its Christian ethos and Church connections. The school organisation, policies and methods emphasise the view that every child matters. As a result, pupils who find learning difficult as well as those with special gifts and talents are well provided for and make good progress. "Relationship {R} time" and "circle-time" are two methods used successfully to give the pupils an insight into their own development and occasionally in the running of the school. The development of the pupils' spiritual and cultural understanding and awareness is good because of the inclusive methods, breadth of curriculum and importance given to religious education and collective worship. In the same way the school successfully promotes a sound level of understanding of the diversity of cultures as well as ensuring that the pupils are grounded in their own.

The pupils accept responsibilities in the classroom and about the school. As a result of work undertaken in achieving the Healthy Schools Award, pupils care for each other and ensure that newcomers are not left to feel lonely in the playground. They are courteous and friendly to the staff, visitors, and generally towards each other.

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

Collective worship is good. It is an important feature in the life of the school and plays a very significant part in the pupils' spiritual development and religious understanding. This is because it is well planned, imaginatively and carefully presented, varied in character and made thoroughly enjoyable in its overall delivery. The vigour of the pupils' singing is outstanding and it is planned as an enjoyable, creative and spiritual experience. Classes arriving in the hall first, rehearse songs and hymns while the other pupils join them. Pupils and teachers sing together enthusiastically to conclude acts of worship. This is an outstanding activity that builds a sense of community and makes collective worship very special for those attending. The prayers said in class at the beginning and end of each day and the grace at lunchtime add to the peaceful and fulfilling rhythm of the school day. There is regular daily collective worship with variations in style and structure from day to day. A common theme is set for the week. Visiting clergy lead worship generally on a fortnightly basis. As a result of this combination of care and variety, the great majority of the pupils join in worship with enthusiasm and enjoyment. The pupils' skills in singing are also used to support events in the local community such as the Rotary Club Schools' Concert. The hall is set out very well providing a focus for collective worship. There are displays of pupils' prayers, many of them very sensitive and mature. There is a good range of Christian artefacts for worship. Pupils participate in worship with reverence and enthusiasm. They write their own prayers and use them. Taken together this ensures collective worship has a good impact on the school community.

#### **How effective is the religious education?**

Religious education is good. The pupils' achievement across the school is higher than usually found among children of comparable ages. This is true of their knowledge of Christianity and Judaism and particularly so of their understanding of these religious faiths. The teaching is very well prepared and planned and makes use of different approaches to developing understanding so that all pupils, whatever their background understanding, make good progress. An example is the successful introduction of a scheme "Godly Play" which is a method of deepening the pupils' understanding and response to stories and parables, recommended by the Diocesan Adviser. The good quality teaching of the subject is the result of the enthusiasm of the teachers and their use of a variety of methods to ensure a high quality of learning. The subject provides outstanding support for the pupils' spiritual and moral development through religious education and collective worship.

The school has adopted the most recent Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus of religious education. The new scheme includes a method of assessing how effective the teaching and learning have been and this is in process of adoption in all classes. Where it is practised it is successful. Pupils are given a good grounding in the subject in the Foundation Stage where it is carefully included in the planning of the six areas of learning together with occasional specific lessons of religious education. In Years 1 and 2 religious education is well taught as a separate subject and occasionally it is included in other topics. This flexibility is strength of the school's curriculum as a whole.

The good quality and well resourced studies in Christianity give the pupils a good grounding in the religious and historical dimension of their own culture. In the same way studies in Judaism provide good insights into a faith and culture different from their own.

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

The leadership and management are good. The Headteacher, governors and staff set out to create and have achieved "a Christian institution with a welcoming face". The Headteacher's very clear vision for the school is shared by the governors and staff and as a result, there is unanimity of purpose apparent in everything the school

does.

The Christian ethos is apparent in the way the school is run from the prayer which introduces and ends Governors' meetings to the sensitivity and care with which staff as well as pupils are treated. Parents are welcomed into the school at the beginning and end of each day but interviews with teachers are limited to the afternoon so that the well established and very effective daily session of staff hearing pupils read is not disturbed. This is a good example of the priority given to high standards in teaching and learning. All pupils have homework often requiring co-operation between the pupils and their parents. Most parents support this approach to homework. Parents also provide good quality support for the pupils' activities in the community such as the Carnival and charity concerts.

The governors have a good understanding of the working of the school. They meet with the staff annually at the beginning of the school year. Governors, who are linked to curriculum areas on a rolling programme visit classes two or three times a year. The school makes good use of the training opportunities offered to both teaching staff and governors so that they are abreast with current thinking.

The links between the school and the parish are of very long standing and the school occasionally benefits from the historic charitable support available to the group of Church Schools in the town. The clergy are familiar visitors to school. Good links with the Diocese for advice and support are maintained.

SIAS report June 2006 Little Gonerby Church of England Infant School Sandon Road Grantham Lincolnshire NG31 9AZ