

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools

Loscoe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church View

Loscoe

Derbyshire

DE75 7RW

Diocese of Derby

LEA: Derbyshire

Dates of inspection: 6th and 7th February 2006

Dates of last inspection: 7th, 11th, and 13th October 1999

URN: 112828

Headteacher: Mr. Stephen Jackson

SIAS Inspector NS 126: Mrs. Susan Seward

Context

Loscoe is a small ex-mining community just outside Heanor located towards the eastern side of the county and close to other similar communities. The school has been housed in a new school building on a single site since the last inspection and the learners now have access to a good indoor environment and set of outside facilities. Learners are taught in five classes that cater for a mix of ages and generally the learners come to the school from the surrounding community. There are 128 pupils on roll. The school is appropriately staffed and led by a Head Teacher who has been in post for two terms.

Summary Judgement

After a considerable period of upheaval and change, Loscoe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is achieving satisfactory progress as a Church of England school. Aspirations and targets for the future development of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of school life are in place to ensure steady progression towards re-establishing an ethos that reflects the Anglican foundation of the school more strongly. In addition to this, relationships within the school community reflect a positive Christian influence and those between the school and parish although limited, are supportive of each other.

Established strengths

- The good relationships between all those working in the school that reflect a strong Christian ethos of compassion, generosity of spirit, curiosity and self-respect.
- The willingness of pupils at both Key Stages to undertake management roles within the school that is at an appropriate level for them and the obvious pride with which they view the school.
- Parental support for the school and the good uptake of the school uniform which displays a very appropriate new school badge based on the cross.

Focus for development

- To enhance the Christian ethos and Anglican focus of the school by encouraging all staff to develop the confidence, knowledge and skills that are appropriate to this type of school.
- To enable the learners to understand their place within the Christian and Anglican church locally at diocesan level and worldwide.
- To resolve the major issue of signage that currently is undermining the Christian, Anglican and public profile of the school within the community and, that is confusing for visitors.

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

The school, through its distinctive character, meets the needs of all learners in a satisfactory manner. The Foundation Governors with other governors subscribe to the Christian foundation of the school in such a way as to encourage moral and socially supportive relationships and atmosphere. However, little monitoring or evaluation of the Christian and Anglican nature of the school takes place and this works to restrict the impact on learners' understanding of the Anglican nature of the school. Although the school has a good profile in the community, its major lack of signs, both within the school grounds and outside, seems a significant factor in the school's low profile as a Church of England school. In addition, some school notices such as the 'Aims' of the school are not phrased clearly in a Christian context and learners had problems associating them with the Christian foundation of the school. However, learners commented on how good the relationships were between everyone in the school and it was clear that they felt valued as individuals as illustrated by one child who said, 'I'm not bullied here and everyone speaks to me properly.' The school is attempting to re-establish a productive relationship with the parish; the learners worship in the parish church twice a year and on occasions their work is displayed there. Learners expressed wishes to visit the church more often and regretted that they didn't have more contact as they saw it as a place of calm; a special place they seemed to lack in school. The learners expressed their sense of compassion and charity when speaking about Harvest and providing for the poor. They were rightly proud of displays of work round the school but singled out the display about a Romanian charity, recently connected with the school, as an initiative of special significance.

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

Overall, the impact of Collective Worship on the learners is satisfactory with some good effective practice taking place at Key Stage 1. Generally, the learners spoke in a positive and constructive manner about Collective Worship, often giving answers in a considered manner that reflected spirituality and empathy. Their enthusiasm for the visitor and achievement assemblies was clear, with the 'Star of the Week' book of achievement being singled out as having particular significance in their lives. Learners were seen to be comfortable and familiar with the worship routine. The lighting of a candle as the focus for worship was accompanied by the spontaneous outburst of singing and learners understood that it symbolized that Jesus was with them. Learners spoke in an informed way about artefacts on the altar in the Hall and about other resources used during worship. The book of prayers used in worship was kept on the altar table and pupils were free to use it during the day. Key Stage 2 pupils were aware of the plans for worship on the wall organized by the Collective Worship Co-ordinator but were not aware of other staff being involved in worship planning. They were not aware that monitoring and evaluation of worship took place and they felt that most staff at Key Stage 2 were not fully engaged in the worship timetable. They regretted that class worship did not happen all the time when timetabled and said that 'we should do it more often'. They indicated that under the guidance of the Worship Co-ordinator, they would be willing to take responsibility for those sessions. The planning did not seem to involve all staff, learners and representatives of the visitor leaders for worship. Pupils admitted that they had little understanding of their place in the Anglican world but they were keen to explore this.

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

Leadership and management of the school as a church school are satisfactory. The Governing Body supported by the Foundation Governors have faced a number of challenges over the past few years of upheaval but have retained their commitment to a Christian ethos for an inclusive school. This has had some impact on the learners who were seen to be playing a part in the management of the school during worship and at lunchtime in a responsible and enthusiastic manner and were looking forward to the re-establishment of their school council. Learners' confidence had been apparent when they had formed an interview panel during the selection of the new Head Teacher and had been challenging in their role. In general, most teaching staff and others support the school's Christian ethos but in a moral and Christian cultural sense rather than explicitly spiritual; some staff having difficulty engaging fully in Collective Worship or promoting spiritual development. However, the new Head Teacher has a positive vision for the school which reflects in some ways its Christian foundation and has set in place initiatives that give members of the community, parents and learners a voice in the management of the school via questionnaires, newsletters and parents' weekly home letter. His future plans are set to empower staff and governors with the intention of sharing the responsibility for the development and management of the school more widely.