

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Manfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School.

Manfield,
Darlington.
DL2 2RG

Diocese of Ripon and Leeds.

SIAS Inspection: 1st March 2006.

Previous S23 Inspection: 10th – 15th March 2000.

URN: 121612

Headteacher: Mrs. Elizabeth Croft

SIAS Inspector: Mr. John M Bushell NS 156

Context

The school is very small with 18 children on roll at the time of the inspection and serves the villages of Manfield, Cleasby and Stapleton.

Summary Judgement

Manfield C of E Primary School is a good church school with a number of outstanding features, including the care and support, which is provided for pupils and the quality of leadership as a church school. At its core is a Christian ethos, which permeates school life and there is a strong sense of community and mutual respect.

Established strengths

- The strong relationships with the church and the village communities, which are supported through the involvement of the rector, the foundation governors and other villagers.
- The leadership of the headteacher, including her involvement with the local church as a member of the PCC and as the editor of the children's page in the parish magazine.
- The Christian and inclusive ethos, which permeates the daily life of the school, values and respects individuals and enables the children to develop their own sense of responsibility towards others, including through a global perspective.
- The reflective approach of the staff towards reviewing and evaluating collective worship, which also involves the children.
- The inclusive way in which the school communicates and consults with parents.

Focus for development

- The school should explore and develop links with schools in nearby urban areas, which are in contrasting contexts, in order to further enhance opportunities for learning about and from other faiths and cultures.
- The arrangements for collective worship need to be reviewed in order to provide a less formal and more interactive setting.

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

The way in which the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meets the needs of all learners is good with some outstanding features

The ethos of inclusion, together with respect for each other is very evident in daily life and also in displays of work, such as 'the importance of responsibility towards each other'. The ethos of the school has been built on an atmosphere where children feel safe and happy. The school supports a range of charities and has supportive links with schools in other parts of the world. The school enriches the lives of the children very well through expressive and investigative activities, where the emphasis is upon exploring the wonders of creation. The school takes part in events with other schools in music and drama, such as the Swaledale choral project. Good use is made of the new and nearby village hall for concerts and games. Carefully presented displays in school and church demonstrate the Christian witness such as, "inside our church is special", with very sensitively written children's poems. Members of the church come into the school to talk about their work, including a church warden.

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

The impact of Collective Worship on the school community is good. Worship plays a central role in the life of the school and the themes are planned on a termly basis mainly following the church calendar and within the Anglican tradition. The school has reviewed collective worship in line with the recently published diocesan guidelines. All of the teachers take turns in leading acts of worship. Grace is said with thought and meaning, and the end of day prayers are written by the children. The evaluation of collective worship is thorough, being carefully recorded and involving the views of the children. There is good use of questioning and resources, including the use of ICT. Candles are lit and together with a cross provide an appropriate focal point. The rector leads the worship fortnightly and leads singing with the playing of his guitar. The school holds services in the Church at key times in the Christian year and these often involve children being involved in leading prayers and readings on Sundays. Whole village community services are also held at the church for the leavers and also for special occasions such as a pets' service. A monthly act of worship and celebration for parents is held in the school. The overall response of the pupils is good and they show appropriate reverence and respect. The seating arrangements in school need to be reviewed in order to provide a more conducive setting for the acts of worship.

How effective is the Religious Education in the school?

The Religious Education is good. Lessons are carefully planned and well resourced, including the use of ICT and the 'Educhurch' website. The school has reviewed and developed the RE curriculum in line with the recently published diocesan syllabus. The teaching reinforces the moral development of the children. Good relationships were evident in both classes. The teachers provide for spiritual development in RE, such as with the focus on special places and the development of understanding of places of worship, with a significant emphasis on their own parish church, but also with good reference to other Anglican and other faith settings. Standards and progress achieved are good and children were able to recall and discuss learning from the previous term's work. The teaching was judged to be good in both classes.

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 quality of leadership makes a most positive contribution. The involvement of the rector, who is also chair of Governors, and the Foundation Governors promote the distinctive vision. They also provide constructive support such as the reports on their visits to school and the harvest festival service. The headteacher is a member of the PCC and she also edits the children's page in the parish magazine. The school often takes part in Church services on Sundays on significant days in the church year. Members of the church community speak very positively of the ways in which the school responds to requests from the church and other members of the community are involved in working with the children, such as the Women's Institute. The elderly are invited to concerts and the carol service when the children serve refreshments. Relationships between staff were observed to be very good and build upon concern for the needs of the individual, friendliness, mutual trust and respect. Parents are consulted through questionnaires, when they usually make a 100% response, and at special consultation meetings, such as recently with staff and governors regarding expectations in terms of children's behaviour. There is evidence that parents appreciate the welcome that they receive at the school and communications with parents are very good.

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