

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Pilsley Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Pilsley Village,
Bakewell,
Derbyshire,
DE45 1UF

Diocese: Derby

LA: Derbyshire

Dates of inspection: July 18th and 19th 2006

Date of last inspection: October 1999

School's Unique reference number: 112891

Headteacher: Mrs. Ann Hall

Inspector's name and number: Mrs. Joan Stratford NS.241

School context

Pilsley is a small rural Primary school with 61 pupils serving the Chatsworth Estate at Edensor and surrounding villages. It was founded in 1849 but the original building has been extended several times over subsequent years. All pupils are White British and from a mix of working class/middle class backgrounds. Very few pupils (2%) are eligible for free school meals or are looked after by the Local Authority. Fewer pupils than average (19%) have learning difficulties or disabilities. Pupils enter the school with above or slightly above average attainment, most have attended the privately run Nursery on the school site. The Headteacher has a substantial class teaching commitment. Note should be taken that this Inspection took place during the last week of the academic year and the Headteacher was about to retire from teaching!

Summary Judgement

Pilsley is a good Church of England School with some outstanding features. It has a strong Christian ethos, which permeates all aspects of school life. Pupils are happy and value their school experience, particularly the level of care they receive. Pupils have good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Effective use is made of the school's attractive environment.

Established strengths

- The outstanding ethos in which all are valued and helped to flourish
- The excellent relationships between members of the school community
- The motivation, direction and example given by the Headteacher over the last 15 years is very good and has resulted in a very successful school
- The good relationship with the Parish Church and the local community
- The support given by governors and parents

Focus for development

- To develop the recording and evaluation of Collective Worship.
- To review the school prospectus and aims to better reflect the strong Christian ethos of the school
- To include Collective Worship and Religious Education in the School Improvement Plan
- To use the National Society Toolkit as a development tool for the new Headteacher, staff and governors over the next academic year

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

The school makes outstanding provision, through its distinctive Christian character, to meet the needs of all its learners.

The Christian ethos is extremely strong and permeates all aspects of school life. Relationships within the school are exemplary and highly valued; pupils speak with great pride about the high standard and quality of care shown by both teaching and non-teaching staff and by each other. Learners of all types flourish, whatever their gifts or talents; academic standards achieved are very good and there are many opportunities for pupils to use their musical, sporting or other gifts and feel valued. An excellent number of extra-curricular activities are on offer. The opportunities for

spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good but this is not celebrated in a clear policy statement or in the school's prospectus. Pupils' behaviour is very good and children are fully aware of the availability of a 'worry box' and a 'bully box' should the need arise. Older pupils provide good support for younger pupils. They enjoy taking responsibility, such as being members of the school council or being a 'Buddy' at playtimes. Pupils appreciate the availability of a 'Prayer Net' in a corner of the hall where they can reflect or pray and of the 'Friendship seat' in the playground for anyone who is feeling sad or lonely. Learners also appreciate the friendships they make and enjoy their time in school. The relationships with the Parish Church and local community are excellent. This is exemplified by the 'Well-Dressing' currently outside the school, made by the pupils who also took an active part in the 'Blessing Ceremony'. A large number of charities, local, national and overseas are supported by the school e.g. pupils held a 'Fair Trade' Coffee Morning. Pupils investigate the cultural context of the charities they support e.g. through the Vicar's links with South Africa.

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

The impact of Collective Worship on the school community is good.

Worship is well planned and is led at different times by the school staff, by the Vicar, who has a well established and friendly relationship with pupils, and by other visitors. The whole school community does not come together for collective worship. The lighting of a candle on a table covered by a cloth of a colour to reflect the season in the Church's year creates a focal point for the worship. The same greeting "Good morning everybody" is always used to open worship, in spite of the strong links with St. Peter's Church Anglican greetings and responses are not used. Pupils compose and write prayers to be used. At an act of worship observed some pupils read their prayers with background music being played, which added a reflective atmosphere. Pupils demonstrated their ability to reflect. Pupils use the term collective worship and speak positively about the experience. A survey carried out by the school in March showed that all pupils regard collective worship positively. One child described prayer as a time to "clear the mind". Important festivals are celebrated in the Parish Church (which is some distance away from the school) and staff and pupils regularly attend the services held there on Sundays. Pupils are not involved in planning and evaluating worship. There is a book of 'Graces', which the children have written themselves, and they take turns to read one out before their midday meal.

How effective is the religious education?

The effectiveness of the Religious Education in the school is good.

Religious Education is recognised by Governors and staff as being of great importance to the school and its pupils. The children are very comfortable when talking about spiritual and faith matters and have a good knowledge and understanding. All lessons observed are at least satisfactory with many good elements. It is obvious from past work seen in pupils' books and from conversations with them that teaching and achievement is good. The amount of work produced is impressive. Work produced by the pupils is regularly on display in Edensor Church. All children are given a Bible in Year 2 which they keep in school to use throughout their time as pupils and which they take with them to Secondary School. The Derbyshire Agreed Syllabus is used as a basis for teachers planning, reference is also made to the Diocesan 'Celebration of Faith'. The planned programme also provides knowledge and understanding of other faiths including Judaism, Hinduism and Islam, which is essential in such a mono cultural school. Recently the whole school went to Derby to visit a Mosque and Sikh Temple to enhance this learning. Pupils greatly enjoyed this experience, although in a lesson on Hinduism some Y3/4 pupils demonstrated a certain amount of confusion between Hindu and Sikh places of worship. Several visitors from other faiths and cultures are invited into the school to talk to and work with the pupils. Religious Education is well resourced with books and there is an adequate supply of other materials and the collection of artefacts is supplemented by borrowing.

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 are good.

The energetic and concerned Christian leadership of the school by the Headteacher is fully supported by the staff, both teaching and non-teaching and by the governors and this contributes to the school's ethos and success. Parents express total confidence in the school to provide a secure and welcoming learning environment. They are kept well informed of all aspects of school life and made to feel welcome when they visit. The Collective Worship and Religious Education Co-ordinator is enthusiastic about her role and fulfils it well in spite of the fact that she has responsibility for another area of the curriculum and has only a 0.5 teaching contract. Pupils have the opportunity to share in the running of the school through their representatives on the School Council. The school management are to be commended for the large number of external awards earned; the pupils are very proud of these achievements. The Governing Body works well and there is a good cross section of well - established and new governors. However it is not always easy to find suitable foundation governors when vacancies occur. The school prospectus and aims do not reflect the strong Christian ethos, which is so evident in the school.

SIAS report July 18th and 19th 2006 Pilsley Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Pilsley Village, Bakewell, Derbyshire, DE45 1UF