

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Arncliffe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Arncliffe
Skipton North Yorkshire
BD23 5QD

Diocese: Ripon and Leeds

Local authority: North Yorkshire
Date of inspection: 30 January 2007
Date of last inspection: November 2001
School's unique reference number: 121546
Headteacher: Mr Duggie Speight
Inspector's name and number: Mrs Sharon Artley (NS 131)

School context

Arncliffe is a very small Church of England school set in a rural location in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. There are currently 25 pupils on roll, coming from farming and professional families. Children are drawn from the surrounding villages and hamlets. 21 pupils are white British with English as their first language. Two children are of Chinese origin, with English as their first language. A new headteacher was appointed at the end of 2006.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Arncliffe as a church school is satisfactory with good features

At the heart of this school is the respect and exemplary behaviour shown by all pupils and the positive relationships between all members of the school community. The new headteacher has already established many systems for school improvement and works with the governors to closely monitor and evaluate their effectiveness.

Established strengths

- The school's commitment to school improvement
- The value placed on the uniqueness of each individual
- The outstanding quality of relationships within the whole school community exemplified by Christian values, creating a secure and caring learning environment
- The way in which school, church and the whole community are 'woven together'

Focus for development

- Develop an approach to Collective Worship which clearly reflects the school's Christian vision and promotes and nurtures pupils' spiritual development
- Create a clearer expression of the school's Christian status through the use of symbols and artefacts.
- Embed strategies to ensure that the leadership and management team, including Foundation Governors, review, monitor and challenge the school's progress as a church school.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good at meeting the needs of all learners and has some outstanding features

Learners willingly express their views about feeling valued and special. They feel cared for and all know they can go to anyone for help if ever they have a problem. This was expressed by one governor as, "Christianity being embedded in the care given to the children". The school is alive with vibrant displays which encourage learning, affirm and encourage pupils and show ways in which pupils reflect thoughtfully on experiences. Children were able to explain the work in such displays as the Sikh Awareness Day, a Christian Values' beanstalk and Inspirational Leaders. Parents are united in their praise for the school and the strength of relationships. Both they and the pupils endorsed the impact of the "5TCs" introduced by the new headteacher – a way in which pupils can be 'spotted' for care, concentration,

commitment, consideration and communication. This is prominently displayed in the school entrance and the whole school community takes pride in it. Staff and children can 'spot' a pupil and rewards are given at the end of each week. Individual pupil progress is carefully tracked and monitored. Pupils cooperate very well together and were observed collaborating in putting together "moon boots" to be used at playtime. Both pupils and parents value the suggestion box in the entrance. This is opened and the contents discussed each week in Circle Time. From this discussion, action is taken, an example being the re-decoration of the boys' and girls' toilets by pupils, parents and staff. The 7 Up club, a fortnightly Christian club attended by most of the Key Stage 2 pupils, provides a range of "fun activities" as the children describe them, but also a time for prayer and Christian reflection. Crafts and posters made at the club are displayed on the church noticeboard. School presentations are sometimes held in the church or village hall. There are many occasions when pupils think of others, recently for example, through the Blue Peter Shoe Biz appeal and following some global dimension work on Africa, Key Stage 1 pupils made and sold biscuits and other items raising money to buy four goats for a village in Africa.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory.

A themed termly plan for Collective Worship is produced jointly by the staff and the vicar. Pupils enjoy singing and responding to hymns and worship songs. They know and understand the Lord's Prayer and Grace is said at the beginning of lunch each day. However, there is currently little opportunity for spiritual reflection or development and the distinctiveness of Collective Worship as a special time is not always obvious to pupils, as there is no regular focal point. As part of the action plan for Collective Worship, the headteacher has recently carried out a survey amongst Key Stage 2 pupils and issues raised are being followed up. Pupils have some opportunities to participate in leading Collective Worship. They were able to describe special times in the Christian year, where they contribute to church services, for example making posies in school which are then distributed during the Mothering Sunday service, creating an Easter garden in the church grounds on Good Friday morning and returning on Easter Sunday to decorate it with flowers, or making loaves or displays for Harvest Festival services. Although there is some monitoring of the effectiveness of Collective Worship, at present it is not systematically evaluated and foundation governors' role in relation to Collective Worship is at the early stages of development. Parents are not currently invited to attend Collective Worship, but they attend the leavers' service and the church services which involve pupils.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is satisfactory with some good features.

Within this community, school, church and village life are seen as being 'woven from one thread'. Pupils, parents and governors comment on the positive impact made by the recently appointed headteacher. Views are sought from stakeholders and used to inform and evaluate policy and practice. Parents welcome the open invitation to visit the school whenever they wish, and feel that any issue will be dealt with effectively. They are regularly informed of pupil achievements and events in the life of the school in a weekly newsletter which is also available on the school website. The monthly community magazine, "The Link" contains a detailed section of news about the school every alternate month. There are both church and parent noticeboards in the school entrance. However, there needs to be a clearer expression of the school's Christian status though the use of symbols and artefacts. Currently the school improvement plan and other key policy documents, for example school prospectus or mission statement, do not include any statements or objectives linked to the school's distinctive Christian character. Although this is evident in the life of the school, it needs to be made explicit in public documentation. All governors are very supportive, and foundation governors have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities for the school as a church school. The vice chair of governors has assisted the headteacher in revising the self evaluation form to ensure that distinctively Christian aspects of school life are recognised. The PCC has supported the school in the purchase of new hymn books. However, whilst Foundation Governors are beginning to discharge their responsibilities in promoting, supporting and challenging the school as a church school, strategies to ensure progress as a church school are not yet embedded.