

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Bolton on Swale St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Scorton  
Richmond  
North Yorkshire  
DL10 6AQ

#### **Diocese: Ripon**

Local authority: North Yorkshire

Date of inspection: 6<sup>th</sup> October, 2006

Date(s) of last inspection: October, 2002

School's unique reference number: 121604

Headteacher: Mrs Bridget Watt

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Linda Hodson M. Ed. (314)

#### **School context**

Bolton on Swale St Mary's C of E (VA) Primary School is situated in the village of Scorton near Richmond. Virtually all of its pupils are of White British background and come from the surrounding rural area. Work is currently taking place to improve accessibility to the school and to create additional office space. The headteacher joined the school in January 2005.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bolton on Swale St Mary's C of E (VA) Primary School as a Church of England school are good with several outstanding features.**

The strong Christian ethos of the school ensures that all pupils are highly valued and nurtured and has provided a firm foundation for change and growth. The headteacher has provided outstanding leadership during this time and has been effectively supported by staff and governors in promoting a Christian vision for the school.

#### **Established strengths**

- A strong Christian ethos permeates the life of the school.
- Christian values impact positively on pupils' personal development and progress.
- The school is clearly distinctive whilst being fully inclusive.
- Provision effectively supports spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

#### **Focus for development**

- In line with school development plans, review planning, progression and assessment in RE in conjunction with Diocesan guidance.
- Develop the global dimension of the school's provision.

#### **The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners**

The Christian ethos in the school is very strong and permeates every aspect of the school's life from documentation and displays through to classroom practice. This is the result of a total commitment to the development of the whole child within a supportive school community. The school's inclusive approach is a natural way of life and is much valued by parents. Christian values are evident in every part of the school resulting in a high standard of care. Pupils feel secure, happy and confident which enables them to achieve well. The atmosphere within the school is relaxed and orderly and pupils are extremely polite and considerate. Relationships within the school are excellent. Parents comment on the positive interaction between older and younger pupils and the schools prompt response to any parental concerns. The School Council provides an excellent forum for pupils to express their views and share in decision making. This has led to improvements in the provision at playtimes and the setting up of the "Playground Buddies" scheme.

**The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.**

Worship is central to the life of the school and underpins its Christian character. Daily collective worship is inclusive, well planned and supports spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils recognise the importance of worship and clearly understand the Christian values that are promoted and apply these in their daily lives. During worship there is an atmosphere of calm and respect which encourages pupils to give positive and thoughtful responses. Staff provide effective role models through their active participation in worship either as leaders or as worshippers. Weekly themes are carefully planned to coincide with key events in the church calendar and all major Christian festivals are celebrated. Such celebrations are well attended by parents as witnessed at the Harvest Festival. Pupils welcome the opportunity to perform plays, recite poetry and sing at these special times. The school's Anglican heritage is further supported through well established links with St Mary's Church. The incumbent is a regular visitor and takes an active role in school worship.

**The effectiveness of the religious education is good.**

Religious Education is recognised by governors and staff as being of crucial importance in a Christian school and the subject's status in the school reflects this. Standards of attainment are comparable with those in the core subjects and pupils achieve well in relation to their different starting points. The vast majority of learners, whatever their faith background, enjoy RE and recognise its relevance in their own lives. Teachers are particularly effective in providing opportunities to develop this e.g. younger pupils recognise that we are all special but different through producing collages of themselves. The school follows the Diocesan Syllabus ensuring that pupils develop an understanding not only of the Christian faith but also of other major world faiths. Here too pupils are encouraged to relate learning to their own experiences. Pupils in years 3 and 4 reflect on how they will look after a precious object before learning about the way Sikhs look after their holy book. A new subject leader has recently been appointed who is an RE specialist. She aims to review planning, progression and assessment and is to attend Diocesan training to support this.

**The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is good with the leadership of the headteacher being outstanding.**

The headteacher has provided outstanding leadership to raise standards and move the school forward through a period of change. She clearly articulates a Christian vision for the school which is understood by parents, supported by all members of the school staff and is evident in all aspects of school life. Governors provide effective support and challenge to the headteacher and contribute to monitoring and evaluation processes. Foundation governors have a clear understanding of their particular roles and responsibilities and have ensured that the school's mission statement and aims reflect the school's distinctive Christian character. The school routinely seeks the views of its stakeholders and responds promptly to issues raised e.g. a family learning project has been set up so that parents can better support their children's learning. Parents are clear that the Christian values of the school impact positively on its learners, enabling them to fulfil their potential and flourish as individuals. The school works in partnership with neighbouring schools and enjoys good community links. It recognises that the formation of international links would further support cultural awareness and provide pupils with a global perspective.