

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Christ Church Church of England Voluntary Aided Infant School**

Victoria Street  
Newark-on-Trent  
Nottinghamshire  
NG24 4UT

#### **Diocese: Southwell and Nottingham**

Local authority: Nottinghamshire  
Dates of inspection: February 1<sup>st</sup> 2007  
Date of last inspection: February 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> 2003  
School's unique reference number: 122792  
Headteacher: Mrs Gill Maguire  
Inspector's name and number: Mrs Kate Gough 257

#### **School context**

Christ Church School serves a mixed catchment area on the outskirts of Newark, a busy market town. It is the only remaining school of six founded by Christ Church in the mid 1800's. Few school families attend local churches on a regular basis. Numbers are presently low, with 73 children on roll, of whom 5 are part-time; all are from white British backgrounds. The Head teacher has been in post for less than a year. Christ Church parish is just entering a period of interregnum.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Christ Church School as a Church of England school is outstanding.**

This school has clearly defined Christ-centred aims and values which are seen in practice in every area of school life. Strong leadership and enthusiastic committed teamwork ensure that all individuals in school feel secure and affirmed, enabling them to learn and flourish. Prayerful and practical support from the Parish Church ensures that the school's Christian Foundation is valued, celebrated and is seen to be distinctive.

#### **Established strengths**

- A commitment to promoting Christian values and the exploration of the significance of faith yet within a culture of respect for those from other faith traditions or none.
- Meaningful links with local churches
- Thoughtful ongoing revision of Collective Worship and RE schemes ensure continuity and quality
- A loving, accepting working environment underpinned by a real sense of God's love

#### **Focus for development**

- Enhance the atmosphere in Collective Worship by more creative use of the visual focus
- Develop a marking policy for RE to indicate the focus of the task and the learner's development in understanding
- Celebrate the links with local churches by advertising their activities and worship times in the entrance area

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

Christ Church School is proud of its historical foundation and has built on the links with the Parish Church, establishing an exceptional mutually supportive partnership. The church family prayerfully and practically support the school. Parents speak of their appreciation of the contribution that the partnership makes to the life and distinctive ethos of the school, even though they may not regard themselves as "religious." Those from a minority faith background feel their beliefs are treated with sensitivity and consideration. High priority is

given to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and every effort is taken to widen the horizons of learners in their appreciation of other cultures and faiths. The School Brochure and SEF list the "Six Principles" which form the basis for life and work, two of which refer to the centrality of Christian values and an awareness of the love of God. The Head Teacher and staff clearly embody these values. Good work, special achievement and kindness are always rewarded and there is a consistent approach to managing unacceptable behaviour which is particularly effective with special needs children. A beautiful mosaic in the entrance area immediately informs visitors of the school's Christian foundation but there is an acknowledgement that more could be done to celebrate the positive links with local churches. The Head Teacher, new to working in a church school, has valued the process of completing the Toolkit and is eager to address any identified weaknesses, with the support of Diocesan advisors, Foundation Governors and the local churches.

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

There is a clear statement in the school brochure explaining the place of worship in the school, describing it as an occasion for "calm, peaceful reflection". This was found to be the case. There was a sense of it being a special time and one which was clearly enjoyed by all those present. The reverent yet relaxed atmosphere encouraged the children to feel comfortable and respond enthusiastically - they spontaneously sang along with the music played as they entered. The theme of Kindness was continued through to the time of prayer and reflection and linked to stories of Jesus heard on previous occasions. Acts of worship are consistently Christian whilst acknowledging and respecting other faith traditions. A visual focus helps to create the feeling of "Sacred space" but could be used to greater effect. Planning is undergoing change to link worship topics more effectively with other curriculum areas - this demonstrates the importance placed on quality provision. Regular visitors from local churches lead acts of worship and are valued for their contribution; the Parish Church-links during the interregnum will be maintained by the popular Youth Worker and other congregation members. The positive partnership which exists has resulted in Church Holiday Clubs and other special events being well supported by school families. Worship takes place in church several times a year and parents express appreciation of these occasions.

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

The co-ordinator expresses her own personal faith through her commitment to the delivery of quality RE throughout school. The policy clearly defines its purpose and content, though needs reviewing. The brochure accurately describes RE in school as delivering a "positive presentation of Christianity". Planning is thorough and is presently undergoing revision to further improve continuity and compatibility with the whole school curriculum and with Collective Worship. Year Two children demonstrate good subject knowledge and are clear about some of the similarities and differences between Christianity and Judaism. They are familiar with artefacts from both faiths and are aware that these should be handled with respect. IT is used effectively in lessons. There are good RE displays throughout school, informing on aspects of the topic, stimulating interest and celebrating children's work. There is an ongoing commitment to build up resources and replace as necessary; local churches are effectively used as a "living resource" ensuring that different places of worship are visited over the key stage. Teachers are well supported by the co-ordinator; there is no system of monitoring teaching at present though this is seen as an important future development. Samples of work are collected but marking does not inform on the focus of the task, knowledge acquired or conceptual development

### **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding**

The Head-teacher, staff and governors work as a team to create a happy and successful church school which is well respected in the wider community. Foundation Governors are effectively involved in ensuring that the school's Christian Foundation is celebrated and that its distinctive ethos is maintained. Staff support and promote the school's Six Principles which cover all areas of school life and set high standards of leadership. The Vicar has been a valued friend and skilled, conscientious Chair of Governors - he will be greatly missed. The imaginative Welcome Service for the newly appointed Head Teacher, held in the Parish Church, was an example of the exceptionally supportive partnership that exists between

church and school. Local churches are committed to working together ecumenically and this is reflected in the management of the school and involvement in its activities. Parents' and learners' opinions are sought informally at every opportunity and specifically through annual questionnaires; the School Council is effective in giving the children a voice. Communication between home and school is excellent and parents feel confident to approach staff at any time. The Head Teacher meets with other church-school heads to discuss relevant issues and is appreciative of Diocesan training opportunities and support.

SIAS report February 2007 Christ Church CE Primary School Newark NG24 4UT