

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Denton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Street

Denton,

Grantham

Lincolnshire

NG32 1LG

Diocese: Lincoln

Local authority: Lincolnshire.

Dates of inspection: 24th May/7th June 2007

Date of last inspection: November 2002

School's unique reference number: 9253017

Headteacher: Mrs Sheriden Edwards (acting)

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Ann Desborough 62

School context.

Denton Church of England Controlled Primary School is near Grantham, in Lincolnshire. Denton has 64 children on roll, 28% of whom receive support under the SEN code of practice and 35% of children are gifted and talented. The children come from Denton, the surrounding village of Woolsthorpe and the town of Grantham. They are of white British origin. Some parents choose the school because of its size, Christian foundation and rural location. An acting headteacher has been seconded into the school. In 2006 the school was awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark and is involved in the Investors of People. The school occupies a small Victorian building consisting of two classrooms with a mobile in the playground. There is no hall or playing field.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Denton Primary as a Church of England school are satisfactory.

Denton Church of England school is closely linked to the parish church and as a result there is a strong, caring ethos based on Christian values, which is evident in the relationships in the school. These are reinforced in the school's mission statement and in what the school offers the community.

Established strengths

- Relationships within the school and wider community are characterised through Christian love and care.
- The leadership and management of the school have a clear Christian vision and are seeking to build on its Christian foundation.

Focus for development

- Encourage, support and challenge the staff in further promoting a church school ethos.
- Ensure that acts of worship are well planned, recorded and evaluated.
- Provide an allocated budget to support the development of religious education.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is satisfactory at meeting the needs of all its learners.

Denton Church of England Primary School is closely linked with the Anglican church and its Christian values. Questionnaire results from parents agreed with this and added that the children felt valued, well cared for, safe, guided and supported. Difficult situations that arose in school were dealt with fairly and quickly. The school serves the local community well. Until recently the vicar held a weekly assembly in church for the school children. At the moment

the parish is in interregnum, but the church members are still involved and visit the school regularly. The school's mission statement, aims and Church school values are set out clearly in the school brochure and displayed in the entrance hall. They are summarised as SPIRIT – success and praise, independence and respect, inspiration and trust.

The standard of the children's work in religious education is in line with the national average. The children have opportunities to explore other cultures, languages and practices. There was evidence of work completed on Christianity, Islam, Noah, prayer, visits to the church and community events all artistically and colourfully displayed around school. Much of the teaching of religious education is through art, drama and stories. There is an additional notice board in the church, which has displays of the children's work on it. The members of the church community felt that the board was an important link with the school and was appreciated by their members who looked forward to its content changing every 6 weeks.

The PCC has agreed for the school to use the church building as an additional classroom where music, drama and dance may be taught and performed. During the inspection, Year 5 and 6 children were in church performing their drama based on a previous lesson on Islam. In addition to the children attending church each week for whole school worship, they visit for Harvest, Christmas, Mothering Sunday and the annual leavers' service. Some children who live in the Parish also attend activity mornings in church during the Easter holidays.

The children participate in the annual street market in Denton, where they dance around the Maypole and man stalls. The children actively support local and worldwide charities and this year already have raised money for Red Nose day, Christian Aid and held an Easter Extravaganza to raise money for small playground equipment for themselves. The last event was organised by the School Council.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children is enhanced by the weekly music tuition given by visiting peripatetic music teachers. Gifted and talented children are taught to play a variety of instruments including violin, saxophone, flute, recorder and keyboard. They use their talents to perform in school assemblies and plays, dance and music festivals, as well as in the Grantham Operatic Society productions.

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

A collective worship policy is in place and a programme of themes for each term is on the curriculum framework. The weekly themes are based on the Church's calendar, festivals and PSHE and citizenship curriculum. Collective worship is planned by the Headteacher and staff, but is usually led by the Headteacher. Not all staff lead or attend acts of worship. The acting Headteacher has taken on the subject leader's role. Parents are welcome to attend celebration assemblies and church services and prospective parents are informed of the arrangements for collective worship in the school brochure.

The act of collective worship seen during the inspection was taken by Mrs Gill Mitchell, the churchwarden. She was assisted by Mrs Ann Pape, a Methodist lay preacher. The school community is keen to develop links with the Methodist church, particularly as the parish is in interregnum. One of the classrooms was used for the act of collective worship. The atmosphere of the classroom was changed to one of contemplation and spirituality by the use of quiet, reflective music for entry and by the lighting of candles. The children were actively involved in the worship, one child read from the Bible and four others read the prayers. The children sat quietly and attentively throughout. The difficult subject of the Trinity was well explained and age appropriate. There was a selection of artefacts for the children to look at and a practical demonstration to watch. The questioning was open and the answers revealed the children's knowledge, which reinforced the importance of the religious life of the school. The outcome of the collective worship, that God is both three and one, was understood by most. The worship ended with a selection of prayers and the singing of an unaccompanied chorus. During the prayers there was time for reflection and the children were asked to

physically place their hands in a triangular shape to remind them of the Trinity, therefore encouraging and supporting spiritual development.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is satisfactory.

There has been a period of great change recently at Denton Church of England Primary School, both with the appointment of the acting headteacher and with the departure of the vicar. The staff and governors have begun working together to provide a strategic vision for the school and to encourage, support and challenge the staff with this while further promoting the distinctiveness of a church school. The distinctive nature of the school is evident in the admissions policy, school brochure, perimeter notice board and school building entrance hall. Members of the school and community are very aware of their Christian foundation, which dates back to 1718.

Since the last inspection, the governing body has addressed all the key issues that were raised at the time. Members of the governing body meet regularly and open and close their meetings with prayer. The Headteacher's report informs them of events and visits, but now a programme of monitoring and evaluation is to be set up along with appropriate governor training. The school has a good supply of religious artefacts and resources, but at present there is no mention in the School Self-Evaluation Form, or in the budget, of monies being allocated for religious education. Similarly, there is no mention of staff receiving sufficient professional development on the teaching and learning of religious education.

The governors annually send out a questionnaire to all stakeholders and where appropriate act on suggestions. The Bishop's visitor attends school termly and the children participate in the Diocesan Education Festival. These activities further bring the Governing Body into contact with the life of the school and are appreciated by the stakeholders.

SIAS report May 2007 Denton Church of England (Controlled) Primary School, Church Street, Denton, Lincolnshire NG32 1LG.