

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

East Cowton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

East Cowton
Northallerton
DL7 0BD

Diocese: Ripon, Leeds and Bradford,

Local authority: North Yorkshire
Dates of inspection: 17th July 2007
Date of last inspection: 27th – 31st May 2002
School's unique reference number: 121488
Headteacher: Mrs Julia Campbell
Inspector's name and number: Meg Cooper 438

School context

East Cowton Church of England School serves the village of East Cowton with half the learners coming from surrounding villages. All learners are White British and the number with learning difficulties is in line with national averages. There are no free school meals. The school has undergone a period of disruption with 5 Headteachers in 2 years prior to the appointment of the present Headteacher 2 years ago.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of East Cowton as a Church of England school are outstanding

The school has an ethos based in Christian values that permeates through all aspects of school life. Its values and aims are clearly stated through the vision and mission statements, and the concepts of forgiveness and reconciliation are central to the culture of praise and reward. Its effectiveness is enhanced by the commitment of the Headteacher, staff, governors and Team Ministry in a culture of 'Possibilities are Endless'.

Established strengths

- The outstanding leadership of the Headteacher.
- The commitment of the vicar and links with All Saints' Church.
- The Christian ethos of the school, reflected in the relationship between staff and learners.

Focus for development

- Extend and embed the monitoring and evaluation system for collective worship led by Foundation Governors in consultation with the Headteacher and staff.
- Increase the involvement of the learners in the evaluation of collective worship.

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

Learners' levels of self esteem, maturity and independence are very high and there is a supportive atmosphere within the teaching and learning areas and also during outside activities. Learners say that the work is interesting and they enjoy the way the foundation subjects are blocked as they can learn in more depth. They say that they are always treated with respect and school is a place where they are happy and confident. Parents feel that the staff team and Headteacher work with them and that the spiritual aspect of the school is enhanced by the vicar and the curate's commitment. During a recent tragedy that affected the school and wider community, parents say that the drawing together of people into school

to support each other was a revelation in that they previously had not realised the depth of caring that they all felt for one another. The effects are still felt deeply and staff, governors, parents and learners continue to work together to uplift one another. Standards of behaviour are good due to being well managed through a system of praise and reward. Any conflicts are dealt with compassionately and fairly. Learners flourish and fulfil their potential whatever their gifts and talents, with their academic achievement showing improvement in relation to prior attainment. The school works hard on multicultural issues through collective worship and visitors. Ghurkhas from Catterick Camp and Indian dancers generated wide interest with learners. Global awareness is a high priority through the initiative 'Send my Friend to School' where learners wrote to the G8 Summit asking for world wide education. The school has achieved a number of curricular awards and the Healthy School Award. There are symbols of Christianity around school, a cross from Peru and one made of blackwood with its duplicate being in All Saints' Church. The school supports charities globally, in partnership with the church and community. The school also partners the church and community in musical performances. The learners sing excellently and staff support the Headteacher in delivery of this aspect of the curriculum. The community is invited to school to share occasions such as 'The Strawberry Tea' where learners sing and play instruments to a high standard.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship occupies a place of vital importance in the life of the school and is a fundamental aspect of its Christian character. Acts of worship are exceptionally well planned by the Headteacher and vicar. The themes are monitored to ensure that the aims of the Collective Worship Policy are covered during the year and for the skills such as speaking and listening that are facilitated through collective worship. The worship evokes willing participation and a positive response from those present. Foundation Governors are fully aware of their responsibilities and have carried out an audit and produced guidelines on collective worship for the Governing Body. The School Development Plan shows an action plan for collective worship. The evaluation of collective worship by Foundation Governors, staff and learners would enhance the school's delivery. Learners behave well and worship takes place in an atmosphere of calm and respect with most staff taking an active role as worshippers alongside the learners. The participants make excellent use of prayer, silence and reflection. Following some evaluation by the Headteacher and vicar regarding the learners' perception of prayer, the vicar and curate made weekly acts of collective worship the focus of their delivery, this term based on 'The Lords Prayer'. There is a display in the hall where learners have stated what prayer means to them. There is a table with a coloured cloth denoting the time of the church year. The table is moved to a central position for participants in collective worship to gather round. Placed upon it is a candle, praying hands, a cross, a prayer cube and the school creed. A special box is placed there with 'jewels' inside, placed by learners as a mark of remembrance and reflection. The vicar worked in school on an Easter project and eight banners were made to celebrate the Easter story. Four are in the hall and four in All Saints' and these are changed periodically. There are excellent links with the local church parish and clergy. The whole school visits All Saints' for Harvest, Christmas, Easter, Mothering Sunday and the Leavers' Service. The school is sensitive to the beliefs and traditions of other faiths and of none.

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

The Headteacher provides an exceptionally strong lead, has the ability to inspire and is committed to promoting a distinctive Christian vision. The governors know the school well and half are church attendees in the village or surrounding area. Foundation Governors encourage the Headteacher effectively in promoting the pastoral and spiritual links between the school and the church. The Headteacher and Foundation Governors have brought about significant improvement in the quality of provision in collective worship and have effectively

communicated the vision of the school to staff. The school is highly inclusive in its evaluation of itself as a church school and enjoys the support of virtually all parents. The curate provides two youth groups – 'Impact' for up to 11 years old in school and an older group who meet at church. The Chair of Governors meets weekly with the Headteacher and feeds back to the Governors on standards and development. The vicar gives an exceptional commitment of time and spiritual support to learners, staff and parents. The distinctive nature of the school as a church school is clearly communicated and understood by those with close links with the school.

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