

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Finedon Mulso Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior School

Wellingborough Road
Finedon
Wellingborough
NN9 5JT

Diocese: Peterborough

Local authority: Northamptonshire
Dates of inspection: 20th November 2006
Date of last inspection: 8th – 12th September 2006
School's unique reference number: 122034
Headteacher: Mrs Linda McLean
Inspector's name and number: Ms Geraldine Hansford 407

School context

Finedon Mulso, a smaller than average junior school, serves an area of very little ethnic or cultural diversity. The local infant school is not a church school. There is some local economic disadvantage and higher than average numbers of pupils are identified as having special educational needs. Pupil attainment on entry to the school is slightly below the national average. The school has suffered considerable upheaval as the result of staff changes; the new headteacher has been in post for one year and the new deputy for a term.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Finedon Mulso Junior School as a Church of England school are satisfactory

The school prospectus, mission statement, website and staff handbook make clear reference to the school as a Church of England school. The school environment reflects the Church of England status with crosses in each classroom, eye-catching displays and a bible for each pupil readily available in class. These support collective worship, RE and learning across the curriculum. Pupils, their parents and the staff confirm that they value the ways in which the school operates according to Christian principles and traditions and they appreciate the close links with the parish church.

Established strengths

- An atmosphere of care and consideration, based on Christian principles, which enables pupils and staff to feel valued and supported.
- High quality acts of worship in which pupils and staff participate enthusiastically.
- Strong and effective links with the local church and community

Focus for development

- Construct a clear plan for the future development of the school as a church school.
- Include specific reference to Christian principles and values in school documentation where this is not yet present.
- Establish strategies, in addition to work scrutiny, for assessing the standards achieved by pupils in Religious Education.

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

The school produces very clear information about its church school status, character and values in its school prospectus and on its website. This information needs to be included in all internal school documents and in school policies. The school offers a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment based on Christian values and this is demonstrated in the care and consideration shown by school members to each other; in good behaviour and attitudes; in pupil appreciation of what the school offers them and pupils taking a responsible role. The school offers opportunities for prayer and reflection in the school building and in the

parish church. This is well received by pupils, parents and staff. Although there is little cultural and faith diversity in the area and amongst the pupils, the school extends invitations to other faith representatives to visit. Through collective worship and RE teaching the pupils learn to be sensitive to the needs of others and they show their concern for others across the worldwide community through fundraising activities. Analysis of a recent survey of parents demonstrated that Christian values are endorsed by the parents, who consider them to be both desirable and important in their child's school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The centrality of worship and the strong links, historical and current, with the parish church are made explicit in the prospectus. The collective worship policy is full and detailed and there is a clear thematic plan for worship throughout the year, which refers to festivals of Christian and other faiths and anniversaries of national and international significance. School and diocesan documentation provides evidence of the school's self-evaluation of worship against the diocesan expectations, which was affirmed during the inspection. The school has identified positive attitudes to collective worship through consultation with pupils and through the school council. Collective worship has an important place in the life of the school. It involves the incumbent, the chair of governors and others who are invited to contribute or to attend. The pupils participate with enthusiasm and talk with interest about what they have learned from particular acts of worship, including major festivals. They also speak of the opportunities they have in class to reflect on worship and to discuss the themes. In order to support quiet reflection the headteacher is planning to have an arbour built in the school grounds, where pupils and staff can spend time in surroundings that enable them to appreciate the beauty of God's world. Parents confirm that their children respond positively to collective worship in school and in church. Pupils and parents express concern about the loss of this special feature of school life when the children transfer to a non-church secondary school. Staff are keen to attend collective worship although not all are currently able to do so at all times because of the hours they work or their role in school. The headteacher is considering ways of making it possible for all staff to participate fully.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

The prospectus clearly identifies RE as broadly Christian, based on the traditions of the Church of England but which includes teaching about other faiths. The RE policy is full and detailed, setting out the legal position of RE; outlining curriculum planning, including reference to teaching and learning styles; relating to other curriculum areas and responding to children with individual needs. There is detailed reference to resources, monitoring and review. A unit of work on Moses based on the Northamptonshire County Council KS2 plan and the school-designed unit demonstrates productive planning of an exciting, interesting and stimulating topic of study, which is designed to promote effective learning and teaching and to meet the range of pupil needs. The inspection confirmed that RE lessons engage the pupils and take account of different learning styles, giving all children the opportunity to participate and to make an effective contribution. Following a lesson based on The Ten Commandments, which stimulated children to think carefully and make decisions about how they could engage in a task without any guidance of the appropriate way to proceed, the pupils were able to explain what they had learned and showed that they had developed their understanding of the need for rules. In another lesson, on the Crucifixion, an audiovisual presentation, combined with time for small group discussion, captured the interest of all the pupils and gave them opportunities for reflection and sharing of ideas and understanding. The pupils were able to describe the events and the effect on the followers of Jesus as well as explaining their own feelings about what they had learned. The incumbent has produced a DVD and complementary CD of written materials on the Holy Eucharist, as an RE resource. Work scrutiny identifies pupil progress consistent with that in other subject areas. Teaching staff express a willingness to teach RE although not all are equally confident in doing so. The new RE co-ordinator recognises her own training needs and those of others and is actively planning appropriate professional development.

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

The headteacher and governors promote a distinctive Christian ethos, firmly rooted in the school and local community and in partnership with the church and the incumbent. The headteacher, senior managers and governors encourage and challenge the school and the wider community to support this ethos through their words and deeds, such as enabling the traditional village pancake race to take place in the school grounds when traffic laws threatened its continuation on public roads; supporting the incumbent in the revival of May day traditions; running a summer school as a collaboration between the school and the church and enabling the Remembrance Day parade to begin in the school playground. In addition, the headteacher and governors write news items for the parish magazine, contribute to church services by reading lessons, for example, and provide reports for PCC meetings. Members of the PCC are invited to attend celebration assemblies and governors are present on the door to meet and greet at parents' evenings. Pupils, parents and staff are able to describe how this high level of support for local activities and events places the school, together with the church, at the heart of the community – actively living the Christian faith and responding to the words of Christ: “Just as you did this for one of the least of these who are members of my family; you did it for me.”

The headteacher and governors have a system in place to ensure that parents are confidentially asked for their views of the school at each parents' evening. Parental responses record the view that the headteacher has made positive changes to the school, which they support. As the result of staff turnover, staff co-ordinators of subjects and specialisms are growing into their new leadership roles. The staff express the view that the headteacher has drawn them together to work as a united and supportive team and they have a strong sense of commitment to and involvement with the priorities identified by the headteacher. These priorities now need to be incorporated into a plan for the school's future development as a church school. The school council's views are highly regarded by school leaders who reflect the value that Christ gave to children. The pupils are “particularly proud of their involvement in selecting the headteacher last year, and the new deputy headteacher who started in the autumn term.”

SIAS report November 2006 Finedon Mulso CEVA Junior School, Finedon, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire NN9 5JT