

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican School

Finningley Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Silver Birch Grove
Finningley
Doncaster
South Yorkshire
DN9 3EQ

Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham

Doncaster LEA

SIAS Inspection: 12th & 13th September 2006

Date of last inspection: October 1999

School's Unique reference number: 106759

Name of Headteacher: Mr. Russell Hall

SIAS Inspector no. 241 Mrs. Joan Stratford

Context

Finningley is a Church of England School for children from age 4 -11, with no nursery provision. It has 163 pupils on roll. The catchment area is predominantly private with a small number of pupils from a nearby housing estate. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those eligible for free school meals are below average. Mobility levels are constantly rising mainly in Key Stage 2. There are no pupils with English as a 2nd language. The Headteacher joined the school in September 2005. The school attained the Healthy Schools' Award in 2005.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Finningley as a Church of England school are good.

The pupils benefit greatly from and appreciate the support and encouragement they receive in school, which is clearly based on Christian values.

Established strengths

- Strong Christian ethos in which all pupils are valued and encouraged in their learning.
- The excellent relationships between all members of the school community.
- The effective leadership of the school as a Church school by the Headteacher and governors supported by a very committed staff team.
- The strong and mutually beneficial links between the school, the Parish Church, the parents and the local community.

Focus for development

- Establish strategies for assessing pupils' work in Religious Education. Make changes to the implementation of the scheme of work for Religious Education in order to cover more topics and to avoid the repetition of topics.
- To produce a better and more attractive prospectus which reflects the ethos of the school.
- To encourage more staff to lead Collective Worship. To develop a record of the acts of worship which includes an evaluation. To review the 4-year programme for Collective Worship.

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

Christian values are evident in every aspect of the school, especially in the quality of care for its pupils. Pupils speak with great pride about the high standard and quality of care shown by both teaching and non-teaching staff and by each other. They are very positive about their school, saying 'the best thing about it is the teachers because they care for us and make the lessons interesting so that we learn things'. Pupils have been responsible for the introduction of a 'friendship bench' in the

playground for anyone who is feeling sad and lonely. Older pupils provide good support for younger pupils. There is very little bad behaviour and no significant issues over bullying. Pupils would like the 'worry-box', which used to be available, to be re-introduced. Meetings are about to take place to arrange the establishment of a School Council. Pupils' work is displayed most attractively in the classrooms and several rooms contain displays in connection with Religious Education. Parents are effusive in the praise of the care offered for their children and that they are always welcomed into school to discuss issues. The 'Friends of Finningley School' are active in organising both fund-raising and social events. The relationships with the Parish Church and local community are good. Several charities, local, national and overseas are supported.

The impact of Collective Worship on the school community is good.

Worship is well planned, but only the Head and Deputy are involved in leading on a regular basis, although the Vicar comes in occasionally to take a service. All staff attend worship, which indicates to pupils that the adults in the school value it. There is a good balance between key stage and whole school acts of worship. The two observed were good, making a valuable contribution to the pupils' spiritual development. Pupils are attentive and behaviour exemplary. A table with a candle is provided as a focus. In one act of worship after a Bible reading ending with 'this is the word of the Lord, the pupils respond 'thanks be to God'. A period of reflection is provided in the prayer time and on some occasions the opportunity is given for children to respond spontaneously with their own items for prayer. Pupils enjoy singing hymns and enjoy listening to music, which is used for entering (although not for leaving). Pupils speak positively about their experiences of worship; this view is expressed in a recent questionnaire, which also requests more opportunities for drama to be included in Collective Worship. This term the Head has made plans to keep a record of the collective worship. The main Church festivals are celebrated in the Parish Church (which is some distance away from the school). These are so well attended by parents and friends of the school that at each Festival two services are held, one for each key stage. Grace is said before lunch and prayers in classes at the end of the day. There is currently no place where pupils can go if they wish to be quiet or reflect or pray.

The effectiveness of the Religious Education is satisfactory

The teaching and learning in lessons is good. Religious Education is recognised by staff as important to the school and pupils. Work has taken place with the Diocese to compile a scheme of work. The scheme is good with interesting material and ideas. However the way in which it is being implemented needs revising. It was written when the school had mixed age classes, whereas all but one class have single age groups. The idea of a whole school theme, which is repeated each year, inevitably means that a limited number of topics are covered and there is repetition of those, which are covered. This limits the effectiveness of the religious education by reducing the range of information on offer to the pupils. The parish is mainly mono-cultural and places of worship for other faiths are some distance away, recently the teaching of other faiths has greatly improved and some good lessons are taking place. However care must be taken that this is not to the detriment of Christian teaching, especially that of an Anglican nature, pupils questioned have a very sparse knowledge of their Anglican heritage. Visits to the Parish Church take place and the Vicar has a book of letters from pupils after a recent visit, in which they describe what they had learnt, this has been on display in the church. A good supply of artefacts for Judaism is available and they are gradually being acquired for other faiths. Assessment strategies for Religious Education are not in place, but the school has identified this as an area for development. A new Religious Education co-ordinator has joined the school this term; she is enthusiastic about her role and will be very willing to take a lead in resolving issues in the Religious Education curriculum.

The leadership and management of the school as a church school are good.

The Headteacher, who has been in office for one year, has made his mark on the school. His energetic and concerned leadership is fully supported by the staff, both teaching and non-teaching and by the governors and this contributes to the school's ethos and success. Parents are aware this is a church school and are regularly consulted on issues. When appointing staff, governors make

clear the school's Christian foundation and its expectations of staff. The school enjoys a close and productive relationship with the local church and village community. The Vicar who is non-stipendiary has responsibility for two parishes. He is involved in schools in his other parish, has an active pastoral role in this school, leads worship – approximately once each half-term – and is Vice-Chair of Governors! The governing body works well and there is a good cross section of established and new governors. The newly appointed Religious Education Co-ordinator is also the Key-Stage One Co-ordinator and has responsibility for another area of the curriculum (Literacy), she is a good addition to work with the Head and enthusiastic Deputy-Head as a member of the Senior Management Team. The school prospectus is a very unsatisfactory document. It is unattractive and does not reflect the strong Christian ethos, which is so evident in the school. The Headteacher has already identified this as a matter of some urgency, in order to make a new improved version available for distribution to applicants for places in the 2007-8 academic year.

SIAS report Finningley Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School Silver Birch Grove Finningley Doncaster South Yorkshire September 2006