

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Guilsborough Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

The Green
Guilsborough
Northampton
NN6 8PT

Diocese: Peterborough

Local authority: Northamptonshire
Dates of inspection: 11 March 2008
Date of last inspection: 1, 3-5 December 2003
School's unique reference number: 122022
Headteacher: Tony Henretty
Inspector's name and number: John Weaver 402, accompanied by Dr Joy Widdows

School context

Guilsborough Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary school is situated in a rural area eight miles north-west of Northampton. There are currently 147 pupils on roll. The area from which its pupils are drawn is predominantly white middle-class British, although some parents from the nearby town of Daventry also make the school their first choice. There is a higher percentage than the national average of pupils on the special educational needs register.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Guilsborough Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary school as a Church of England school are good

Guilsborough CEVA Primary school is a good church school. Parents and pupils are clear about the ways in which the school's Christian ethos is a positive influence. The school's commitment to the development of the individual ensures that the vast majority of pupils develop into well-rounded people. The strong Christian vision of the head teacher, supported by an active governing body, has enabled the school to become a place where faith underpins action.

Established strengths

- The ways in which the school's spiritual, moral, social and cultural teaching has impacted on pupils, directly influencing their relationships with each other and their involvement in the wider community
- The contribution made by collective worship and the monthly communion service to the pupils' spiritual development
- The strong links between the school and the six Anglican parishes from which the school's pupils largely come

Focus for development

- Increase the ways in which marking, feedback and formative assessment in religious education enable the pupils to achieve higher standards
- Refine and sharpen the systems for monitoring and evaluation the impact of the school as a church school on its learning community
- Develop the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship so that the impact on pupils' spiritual development and learning outcomes is recorded as part of school development planning

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

Pupils are given a wide variety of opportunities to develop an understanding of the world around them and to reflect on the wonders of God's creation. The school environment has been carefully developed so that they can observe natural cycles taking place (frogs returning

to the school pond to spawn on inspection day). The school has built up the teaching of social and emotional areas of learning within a Christian context so that pupils are able to engage with real issues in their day-to-day lives and resolve them. All pupils know that they are valued as individuals and have many different ways of being able to seek help, both openly and anonymously, if they wish. Parent questionnaires and interview data clearly show the value they place on the school's Christian ethos. Pupils speak warmly of the many ways in which all the adults in the school will go the extra mile to help them thrive as individuals. This leads to a high level of care for individuals throughout the school community which enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make good progress. The pupils' spiritual development is of a very high level. Pupils' achievements are celebrated regularly, both within acts of worship and throughout the school building. One pupil glowed with pride as he showed the inspectors a display of persuasive writing by pupils who, in his words, had previously struggled with literacy. This philosophy makes pupils keen to achieve even more.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Two acts of collective worship were observed. In the first, pupils from year 5 led an act of worship based on their visit to Coventry cathedral. Their understanding of the issues of forgiveness and reconciliation based on their visit to Coventry was clear, and prayers that the pupils had written themselves supported the worship. Parents joined this act of worship and found it moving. The second was on the theme of hope, linked to new life in spring. Pupils' attention was engaged by the use of multimedia images to support the leader. A stronger scriptural link would have been appropriate here. The school's Anglican foundation is well supported within the planning of collective worship. The use of greetings such as 'The Lord be with you' at the commencement of worship, the use of collects and prayers from the Anglican service, and the monthly communion service in school all ensure that the worship is firmly rooted in the Anglican tradition. Every member of the school community participates in the communion service, whether Anglican or not, and adults gain spiritually from it as well as pupils. Pupils take advantage of the spaces given to them for reflection, and say that these, together with the various focus points in the school hall and school building generally enable them to think more deeply about issues raised within the worship. The prayer tree in the hall enables pupils to have a direct input into prayers at collective worship. The school worships in Guilsborough church at Easter and Christmas. Regular active involvement in collective worship and the communion service is much appreciated by the pupils, who say they would like even more! Songs, particularly those with actions, also engage the pupils and fire their enthusiasm. All these make a strong contribution to the pupils' spiritual development. Collective worship is regularly monitored and evaluated by the head teacher, a foundation governor, and through pupil surveys, and further development of this to focus more sharply on the impact on pupils would continue the improvements made since the previous inspection.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

Pupils enjoy religious education, principally because teachers have worked hard to ensure that lesson planning encompasses different teaching and learning styles and active and interactive participation. Drama is used effectively as a teaching and learning tool, and the use of the Espresso interactive story book has engaged the younger pupils well. The introduction of the Northamptonshire agreed syllabus in 2007 has facilitated greater rigour in the planning for the subject, and has enabled the school to plan for progression more effectively. Standards in RE are above national expectations, but not as high as are standards in Literacy, although the latter were well above national expectations in 2007. A cycle of visits to, and visitors from faiths other than Christianity enable the pupils to gain first-hand experience of these elements of the curriculum. Pupil interviews showed the positive impact of RE teaching and learning on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, one pupil was able to describe how learning about Jesus' temptation in the desert enabled him to resist temptations more easily. The school has correctly identified that the monitoring and evaluation of learning outcomes needs to be more systematic. The school should also consider the need for greater differentiation in the ways in which tasks are set for some pupils, and ways in which feedback to pupils, whether oral or in the form of marking can more systematically enable pupils to improve their work.

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

The head teacher and staff articulate a strong Christian vision that has underpinned the development of the school as a church school over a number of years. The school's Christian ethos is well promoted in all its documentation, on its website, and all the relevant school policies emphasise this aspect of the school. All those working within the school understand the school ethos and work actively to support it. Partnership with parents and other stakeholders is very well developed, and parents told the inspectors that if they have any concerns they are able to talk to anyone in the school at any time. Recent parent questionnaires show very high satisfaction levels in many areas. The school leadership is aware that it serves an area that is predominantly white British and has therefore made links with schools in South America, Canada and Africa. A visitor from the African school had a strong impact on the pupils. These links enable the pupils to experience other cultures at almost first-hand, and the planned exploration of the 'international schools' agenda should enhance this further. The links that have been built up with the churches in each of the parishes served by the school are very strong, and as a result the pupils are confident in expressing and practising their faith. The school's self-evaluation is honest, and the school leadership has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a result of their monitoring and evaluation, the school governors have in the last year concentrated their efforts on raising standards in the core subjects. This has been successful, and they should now further develop their monitoring and evaluation of the distinctiveness of the school as a church school and the contribution that can make to the lives of the pupils.

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