

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Heworth Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

53, Heworth Road,
York.
YO31 0AA

Diocese: York

Local authority: City of York

Dates of inspection: November 29th 2006

Date of last inspection: March 4/5th 2003

School's unique reference number: 121605

Headteacher: Mr David Brown

Inspector's name and number: Mr Bob Duerden NS 282

School context

The school serves the community living in the parishes of Heworth Holy Trinity with St Wulstan's and Heworth Christchurch, a mixed residential area close to the centre of the City of York. There are 131 pupils on roll. A small number of pupils are from a non-white British background and children from other faiths also attend. Parents see the school as their school of first choice. The attainment of pupils on entry is in line with national expectations. The school has adopted a very creative approach to the compact nature of the site.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Heworth Primary as a Church of England school are outstanding

The school's distinctive Christian character permeates and informs every aspect of the provision made to meet the needs of all its learners. Christian values are at the heart of this school and are recognised and valued by pupils and their families. Relationships at all levels within the school and with its churches and community are outstanding, as is pupil behaviour. RE and Collective Worship both feature in the school's development planning. The Head, well supported by staff and governors, is taking the school forward with drive and enthusiasm. Foundation governors are very well aware of the importance of their role.

Established strengths

- The very strong Christian ethos and its impact on every aspect of school life and on the value given to each individual, young and old.
- The outstanding relationships evident throughout the school, which promote very good learning.
- The provision for, and exceptional quality of, the acts of Collective Worship.
- The high status given to R.E. and its increasing influence on the wider curriculum.

Focus for development

- Look for ways of clarifying the nature of a Christian/Anglican foundation school to a secular audience.
- Implement the plan to give higher status to RE in reports to parents and ensure that all staff are aware of the distinction between learning about and learning from religion.
- Governors should make provision to evaluate the school's foundation status.

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

The school values each child as a unique individual. It aims to enable each one to achieve their potential and there is careful monitoring of each child's progress. Standards are very good. Its overtly Christian values are consistently reflected in its provision for the pupils. As a result, the school is very highly thought of by all members of its community. The school is seen as a haven by parents whose children have experienced difficulties elsewhere. Families from other faiths have felt very welcome. The children feel well cared for. They

speak of feeling safe and of enjoying coming to school. The school atmosphere is warm and welcoming. Relationships are exemplary. Most significant is the way that many of the children have learnt how to reflect on and express personal spiritual values. In his personal assessment one pupil wrote, 'I need to work on my forgiveness because I don't forgive that well.'

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The head teacher chose to be the co-ordinator, which emphasises the importance of the role. An early decision was to move the timing to the start of the school day to emphasise its importance in the life of the school. Provision is very well planned between the staff and local Anglican and Methodist clergy. Anglican aspects are well served by following the liturgical year. There is an exemplary balance in the forms of worship, which gives opportunities both for quiet reflection and lively activities. Children speak enthusiastically about collective worship and become totally absorbed by the content. The use of external resources such as the York churches' YO-YO team enhances their experience. They speak very well of how they have become aware of the needs of others as a result of their understanding of the spiritual and moral messages conveyed in collective worship. Worship is exceptionally well used to encourage the sense of the school as an extended Christian family, and all staff attend. Good provision is made for the periodic evaluation of the impact of Collective Worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The recently appointed skilful and enthusiastic R.E. co-ordinator has taken on the teaching responsibility throughout the school. This has secured much better progression than was previously the case. Excellent provision is made to link content with the Early Learning Goals for Foundation Stage children. The planning, resourcing, monitoring and assessment of RE is exemplary. RE lessons are of the highest quality, creative and fun but carefully designed to engage each pupil's interest; they also very successfully emphasise the importance of learning from religion as well as about religion. As a result, children speak enthusiastically about their work and have an unusual ability to express thoughtful reflections on spiritual and religious matters of concern to them. They are very knowledgeable about both the Christian and other world faiths. Changes to the reporting system are planned to give RE the same status as the core subjects. Very good links are being made between the RE curriculum and personal, social, health and citizenship education, as well as into other subject areas. The school is full of high quality displays which reflect the children's learning through RE and the links to other areas of study. RE is accorded high status, is well resourced, and has a carefully thought out development plan.

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

The Head is outstanding in his leadership of the Christian ethos of the school. The Christian purpose and the importance of links with the parishes and the diocese are clearly emphasised. The school and governors are strongly united in supporting the Christian perspective and values in determining school issues and practice. Clergy and governors give strong support to the Head and his staff. Foundation governors are a strength and their distinctive role is clear. As a result, parents rate the leadership and management of the school very highly indeed. All issues raised in the previous inspection have been carefully reviewed and acted upon, although a more specific focus on the foundation aspects of the school in the annual self-evaluation cycle would be a good next step. As well as worship and R.E. they play a full role in all aspects of school life, e.g. as link governors to each subject. Since the last inspection nearly all the staff have changed but it is clear that staff feel highly valued and enjoy working at this school. The school has a very good understanding of its communities and of its Christian mission as well as the importance of providing a very good education.