

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Ingoldisthorpe Church of England Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School

Shernborne Road
Ingoldisthorpe
King's Lynn
Norfolk
PE31 6PE

Diocese: Norwich

Local authority: Norfolk
Dates of inspection: 20th September 2007
Date of last inspection: October 2002
School's unique reference number: 121134
Headteacher: Mr Keith Twaites
Inspector's name and number: Reverend Philip G. Blamire (382)

School context

Ingoldisthorpe is a smaller than average Church of England voluntary aided primary school with currently 88 pupils on roll all of whom are white British. It serves the village community in this part of West Norfolk as well as attracting pupils from outside its designated area. The village and school lie within a group of three parishes served by a Rector who has been in post for three years.

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

The highly effective leadership and management of the Head Teacher in close harmony with the Foundation Governors, encourages and supports the pupils and staff in an atmosphere of Christian service, care and tolerance. These values are shared and lived out by the whole school community.

Established strengths

- Pupils and Staff feel valued and special
- Clear and sensitive Christian leadership of the Head Teacher and Foundation Governors
- Good and effective teaching and learning in Religious Education

Focus for development

- Monitoring, assessment and target-setting in Religious Education
- Involvement of pupils in leading and presenting Collective Worship
- Support for families in need in the community

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

The strong Christian ethos of the school pervades all areas of school life. The visually impressive school prospectus and web site show a clear and unambiguous sense of the Christian message of love, service and tolerance. These Christian values are headlines in the documentation leaving no doubt for the reader that this is a school with a proud Christian foundation. This vision and foundation is lived out in the school community amongst the staff and pupils. Relationships are good and are strengthened and reinforced at every opportunity by the positive way people treat each other and handle issues to do with inclusion. The wall displays are colourful and vibrant and many speak of the caring ethos and clear focus on the initiative 'Every Child Matters'. Wall displays proclaim 'Stay safe' and 'Make a Positive Contribution' - key statements illustrated and affirmed by the pupils in their good attitudes and behaviour towards each other and in their environment. Enthusiastic members of the Christian Union school group related well to the school's Christian ethos and to the gospel message of helping one another. There was considerable involvement of pupils in the shoe box appeal. One pupil stated firmly that as Jesus wanted "to make the world a better place...we should do the same". The 'Friendship Stop', placed strategically in the playground, is a visible, practical sign encouraging older pupils to look after younger ones who became isolated at playtime. This positive reinforcement of the caring ethos is as impressive as it is outstanding. One parent talked enthusiastically about the school being happy and secure and that, for his children with particular needs, the staff "couldn't have done more for them". Another parent expressed their favourable view of the school in the way that it taught the values of the Christian religion particularly in relation to the "family feel" where "everybody is bothered about everyone else". One development issue that the school wishes to progress is looking to support families in need, possibly by the use of the parish priest in the rôle of school chaplain.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory.

The school is committed to collective worship as an important part of the school day. Foundation Governors recognise that importance and they monitor an "assembly log book" that records the daily, planned assembly of the school for worship. Pupils do not distinguish between "assembly" and "worship" and do not recognise the spiritual dimension of the latter activity. The pupils do talk about "assemblies" with some enthusiasm particularly recalling the times when they were directly involved in its presentation. In the collective worship viewed, the pupils came into the hall to the accompaniment of quiet music. The intention was to establish an atmosphere of quiet reflection. On this occasion the pupils were, however, rather restless and the intended impact lost. The singing of the hymn lacked confidence and not all were involved. The worship did not include quiet moments of reflection. In a recent survey of pupils' views on assemblies, a number requested "more action songs" to help the singing. The worship was well planned and involved the pupils in contributing to the main theme of Harvest - of sharing and thanksgiving. They did so with some enthusiasm and made perceptive and sensitive comments. This was a good feature inspired by the teacher leading the worship. Pupils are given opportunities to read out prayers as part of the worship and they have all learnt the contemporary version of the Lord's Prayer. Prayer also features at lunch time and at the end of the school day. The hall in which collective worship is held has good and reflective displays connected to church and the Christian faith. A cross is prominently displayed with the words of the Lord's Prayer featured by the side of it. A church frieze depicting the local village church of St Michael and All Angels has its stones as the faces of the children. Pupils were keen to tell of their connection with their local church and the times that they worshipped there at major Christian festivals particularly Harvest, Christmas and Easter. One development issue that school wishes to encourage is pupil participation in both leading and presenting collective worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

The good and effective teaching and learning of Religious Education benefits from the thorough planning, enthusiastic presentation and careful monitoring of the subject across the school. As a consequence good progress is being made. The good and effective leadership and management of the subject by the RE Co-ordinator is ably supported by the encouragement and keen interest of the Foundation Governor responsible for its oversight. The regular input by the Governor is entirely helpful and does much to ensure that adequate resources and training are in place. Observations of lessons have been put in place on a regular basis since Summer 2007. The monitoring and setting of targets for pupils' progress is being introduced using new software. This is an area for development that the school anticipates will improve the standard of work and will enable pupils to become involved with their own assessment. The lessons observed with the new Reception class and with years 3 and 4 were good. With the latter group, the pupils were involved in learning about the importance of Rama to Hindus with a specific focus on the heroic story of 'Rama, Sita and the Demon King'. The pupils made perceptive and relevant observations on what could be learnt from that religion. They responded keenly and confidently. The brisk pace of the lesson ensured that they were on task throughout and engaged on the variety of activities. When appropriate the pupils listened intently and, in answer to specific questions, made good and accurate use of a wide range of vocabulary. There was a powerful moment of reflection at the end of the lesson when pupils gave a variety of responses to a wider discussion on "heroes". For one pupil Jesus was her hero and justified her answer with reference to the heroic character of Aslan the lion in C.S. Lewis' 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe'. Pupils' work is carefully presented in their exercise books. There is well documented assessment by the teachers. RE impacts on learning in other curriculum areas and vice versa for example by guided reading through Bible stories; the use of software for both key stages in learning about religion; and the study of India in geography.

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

The Head Teacher, staff and Foundation Governors speak confidently about the strong ethos of the school as a community that lives out Christian values of kindness, consideration and respect for individuals. In the school's documentation, prospectus and web site this message is clearly celebrated and does much to reinforce the good practice that is evident in the positive relationships between staff, pupils and parents. Staff well-being is also a priority for the school. A recent survey indicated high agreement by staff that they felt valued and recognised for the good contribution they make to the running of the school whilst fully supporting its caring ethos. The Head Teacher and all adults working in the school are good rôle models for the pupils and effectively encourage the clear Christian vision at the heart of the school. This is reflected in the good behaviour of the pupils and the inter-action between pupils, staff and visitors who are greeted with uninhibited smiles and politeness. The school leadership considers the inclusion of all its pupils as a high priority in the learning and caring environment. To that end the 29% of the pupils who need specialist support are given every opportunity to take a full and active part in the life of the school. There is good and effective high-level Teacher Assistant support and also volunteer parent support to enable this to happen.

The Church and its parish priest play a significant and active rôle in the encouragement of the Christian ethos of the school. Weekly visits to the school enable the Rector to support and monitor the effectiveness of its Christian foundation. Access to the parish church (via a gate from the playing field) is easy and inviting. Regular use by the school of the church at main festivals such as Mothering Sunday, Harvest, Christingle and Easter are well attended by parents and involve the pupils in the presentation of the services. The recent introduction of a Christian Union school group is fully supported and co-ordinated by the Rector. The pupils in this group speak positively about their growing faith and welcome the regular opportunity to explore issues in a fun and lively way.