

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Kirby Hill Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Lane
Kirby Hill
Boroughbridge
North Yorkshire
YO51 9DS

Diocese: Ripon & Leeds

Local authority: North Yorkshire
Dates of inspection: 11th October 2007
Date of last inspection: September 2003
School's unique reference number: 121504
Headteacher: Mrs Vicki Farby
Inspector's name and number: Mrs Fiona Beevers (351)

School context

Kirby Hill Church of England Primary School is a rural primary school (NOR 112 + 26 f.t.e Nursery) serving the communities of Boroughbridge, Kirby Hill and surrounding villages and hamlets. The vast majority of pupils are of white British heritage. The school is housed in a modern purpose built school building with extensive grounds. The headteacher has been in post for almost three years.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Kirby Hill C of E Primary School as a Church of England school are good with some outstanding features

The headteacher, foundation governors and staff successfully engender a caring family atmosphere, founded on distinctive Christian values. The school promotes the rounded development of pupils, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, through a broad and rich curriculum.

Established strengths

- The strong and mutually supportive links between the school and the church community
- An inclusive Christian ethos through which learners feel valued and accepted and are enabled to develop as thoughtful and thinking individuals
- The excellent, caring leadership of the headteacher and foundation governors supported by all members of staff
- The high quality of personal spiritual, moral, social and cultural development for all pupils

Focus for development

- Extend formal opportunities for the pupils' voice to contribute to evaluation and decision making at a strategic level
- Further develop pupil involvement in leading and evaluating Collective Worship
- Embed further opportunities for spiritual development alongside the PSHCE curriculum

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

Parents and pupils comment very favourably that this is a happy school, like an 'extended family' where they feel welcomed, cared for and secure. A range of strategies in which older pupils take responsibility for others reinforces a strong ethos of care and respect which percolates throughout school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and have a very positive attitude to their learning. Parents comment that the school enables children to develop as rounded individuals both socially and academically. There is a strong emphasis on personal development which enables children of all ages are able to express their thoughts and feelings confidently and with an increasing awareness of others. Some older pupils display a

particularly sensitive and mature response to others. The Traidcraft committee of Year 5 and 6 pupils express their reasons for being part of the group and their aims for supporting Traidcraft very clearly. They also recognise the responsibilities that this entails and enjoy promoting this enterprise with other members of the school and church communities. The school has developed a broad and rich curriculum which enhances the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners. Carefully planned themed weeks (Arts week, Multicultural week, Rural arts project) and participation in Diocesan projects (Interfaith project, Sing Together) enable pupils to learn about, and learn from, people from different social, cultural and religious backgrounds. The development of 'learning journeys' throughout school will provide further opportunities to integrate pupils' spiritual development within the PSHCE curriculum. Evidence of a Christian character is found throughout the school both in terms of relationships; characterised by mutual respect, kindness, forgiveness (and as one younger child stated "it's always good to say sorry" when you have hurt someone) and in the bright and interactive displays found throughout the school. Very good use is made of the school grounds. Pupils appreciate and care for the different areas - from the garden, where Foundation Stage pupils have grown their own vegetables, and the adventure trail, to the faith garden where pupils like to sit and be quiet and sometimes to reflect.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship has a central place in the life of the school and underpins its Christian character. The worship is distinctly Christian and supports the school's Anglican heritage. Acts of worship are well planned and are based around the church's year. Worship elicits very positive responses from those present and takes place in an atmosphere of calm and respect. Children responded positively and knowledgeably during an act of worship led by the church worship group on the theme of 'Rules' and focussing on Jesus' summary of the commandments. Most staff take an active role as worshippers alongside the pupils. Prayer is a regular part of the life of the school; classes say or sing a grace before lunch and each class ends the day with a prayer. Children know the Lord's prayer and some other traditional prayers and songs. They speak openly and naturally about God and prayer and take a particular interest in the range of different crosses which are displayed around school. Collective worship is reviewed and evaluated by the Vicar and the Headteacher and also informally reviewed by those leading worship on a regular basis. However there are currently too few opportunities for pupils to be involved in leading and evaluating worship. There are excellent links with the local church with the Vicar and the Church worship group leading collective worship on a regular basis. The local Methodist minister also leads collective worship occasionally. The school holds some services at special times of the year in the church, though this is limited due to constraints of space and also joins with the church for special celebrations.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is good with some outstanding features

The headteacher articulates a clear Christian vision for the school which was described by one member of the school community as 'transformational'. The foundation governors are frequent visitors to school and they nourish, encourage and challenge the headteacher very effectively. Strong pastoral links with the parish and the diocese support the school well in promoting its Christian ethos. The headteacher has led the school in raising standards and in building a team with a shared vision for the school as a church school. Parents' views are sought and valued and the school enjoys the active, regular and informed support of the vast majority of parents and the wider community. Parents speak very highly of the headteacher and staff and view the links with the church as an 'extra dimension' which is part of their wider development and understanding and where children feel comfortable to see the church building as 'their church'. The views of pupils are sought in a range of ways and their suggestions are taken into consideration, however formal systems for seeking pupils' views of the school as a church school are less well developed. The school trustees play a significant role providing additional funding for special projects e.g. the faith garden and play areas, faith based experiences e.g. 'Lifepath', and providing bibles for year 6 leavers; all of which enhance the broad educational experience.