

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Kirkby La Thorpe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School,

Church Lane,
Sleaford,
Lincolnshire.
NG34 9NU

Diocese: Lincoln

Date of Inspection: 15.01.07

Date of last inspection: March 5th and 8th 2002

School's unique reference number: 120527

Name of headteacher: Mrs. Sue Bradley

Inspector's name with National Society Inspector's Number: Mr. Greg Marsden, 381

School Context

Kirkby La Thorpe Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School is situated in the Parish of St. Denis in the village of Kirkby La Thorpe, near Sleaford. It is a small school with 137 children on roll at the time of inspection, and serves a wide area, with pupils coming from a number of villages and the town of Sleaford. Sixteen percent of the pupils have special needs. Baseline assessment indicates that pupils on entry attain at around the nationally expected range of levels.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Kirkby La Thorpe as a Church of England school are good

This is a good church school, and Christian values are to be found throughout its ethos and its Leadership. The school has begun to develop its planning and provision for Collective Worship, and continuing improvement in this area is a management priority. Well-developed and positive personal relationships are enabling it increasingly to live out its commitment to the Christian tradition.

Established Strengths

- The strong and well-developed links with the local Parish.
- The high quality of relationships, making everyone feel valued and important.
- The vision and ambition of leaders and managers, leading to a fast pace of development.
- The good range of extra-curricular provision.

Focus for Development

- Consider and implement ways of making more explicit the already inherent links between the values of the Gospel and the values of the school.
- Introduce into the development planning cycle, specific provision for the maintenance and development of the school's distinctive ethos.
- Broaden provision for collective worship in order to provide planned differentiation for different ages and stages of pupils.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, meets the needs of all learners at a good level.

The Christian ethos of the school is evident in some classroom wall displays relating to R.E. (religious education) themes. In conjunction with the parish, an exciting new permanent welcome display is in preparation that will become the key to making this ethos clear to visitors. The school aims to create a happy working atmosphere in which all can reach their potential, and this is being achieved. Good rates of progress are achieved due to good teaching and careful analysis of results by the headteacher. Two pupils who had joined the school recently, commented upon how much more they had achieved than compared with their previous experiences. They ascribe this to better teaching. Pupils appreciate the variety of extra-curricular activities open to them, for example Year Two pupils were excited about their new gymnastics club.

This is happy school, which is evident in the cheerful demeanour of the pupils. They express their confidence in the adults who work with them... "They are kind and helpful, they sort things out for you. They make learning fun." As a result, the quality of relationships is very high as attested by the incumbent, "They are not putting on an act." School Councillors feel that their ideas are listened to and acted upon. They have a voice in school development. The school is therefore very successfully meeting its aim of basing the way in which people treat each other on Christian values. However, the link between this strength and its foundations in the Christian Gospel is not always sufficiently explicit.

Parents appreciate the school's approach to supporting them and their, "Family values." Good R.E. (religious education) teaching plays a positive role in informing the school's distinctive ethos. Pupils consider the subject to be, "Fun," achieve well and are able to make good links between current and previous learning. For example, a Year Four pupil working on Diwali was able to perceive a link between certain aspects of the festival and the concept of Jesus as the Light of the World. The link with the local parish is well developed and a strength of the school. The parish feels that the school is, "Well prayed for." An active and committed Bishop's Visitor (also a Foundation Governor) works successfully to promote this link, and is supported very well in this endeavour by the headteacher. This has resulted in a thriving and inclusive youth group at the church that is able to build its membership upon the relationship with the school and its parents.

Pupils are taught to respect God's creation, and pay careful attention to this in their 'Eco Committee' work, which is of a good standard and is making a real impact. There is a high level of support by pupils and their parents for a wide range of charitable activities designed to increase children's understanding of 'one-world' responsibilities.

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

Collective Worship takes place largely on a whole-school basis. The act of worship that was observed was led by the incumbent who is a regular and supportive visitor to the school. It was of a good standard. Pupils were observed to have a prayerful and reverential attitude towards worship, underpinned by the appropriate use of music. However, the school hall is insufficiently stimulating as a special place for worship, and there is no significant evidence of regular worship in smaller groupings. Younger pupils said that they enjoyed their worship, but older pupils felt insufficiently challenged by it. They would like the opportunity to take more of a lead in this area of the school's work, and to plan worship of their own.

The school makes monthly use of the church for worship, and this makes explicit to a good standard many aspects of the Anglican tradition. The church is also used for worship connected with the

major festivals of the Church's year, for which there is a full programme. Children are able to talk with confidence about the church building and its functions, and like to be actively involved. For example, on a study visit related to the R.E. (religious education) programme, pupils requested the opportunity to pray. However, the opportunity to support and develop the quality of prayer through the R.E. (religious education) programme is not yet taken up.

Family class-led assemblies are appreciated by, and make an impact upon parents, who feel involved in collective worship as a result. One parent from a village where the church had closed said that the school, "Was Church," for her.

The school has identified the need to provide more training for staff, plus better resources for the development of higher quality collective worship.

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

The headteacher expresses a clear overall vision for the school and is enabling it to make substantial and steady progress. She is a good motivator of people, and this, combined with her effective management style means that she is well-supported by all the staff and governors, who speak highly of her caring attitude. She provides a good model of Christian leadership, and the significant progress that the school has made in the past three years is evidence of this. This is evident in the considerably enhanced learning environment provided by extensions to, and refurbishment of the school building. The pace of development is high.

All staff are aware of the school's mission, but are not always able to explain it fully in the Christian context. However, the way in which school development is managed has ensured that staff are actually enabled to help pupils to reach high standards in terms of outcomes. For example, many older pupils mentor their younger compatriots very well, in line with the stated aims of the school. The headteacher is aware of the need to enhance the distinctive ethos of the school and the quality of collective worship. Planning is under way for significant interactive involvement of staff and governors in this process. The commitment of those groups towards a collective approach is clearly stated.

The governing body is ambitious for the school and is aware of the need to provide greater challenge as a critical friend. However, it is not yet sufficiently enabled to carry out this role in respect of the distinctive Christian ethos of the school.

The overall commitment of the headteacher and the governors ensures that the capacity for further development at the school is good.

January 2007 SIAS report, Kirkby La Thorpe Church of England Controlled, Church Lane, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 9NU.