

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Kirk Smeaton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Main street,  
Kirk Smeaton,  
Pontefract  
West Yorkshire,  
WF8 3JY

#### **Diocese: Wakefield**

Local Authority: North Yorkshire  
Date of inspection: 9 July 2008  
Date of last inspection: October 2004  
School's unique reference number: 121573  
Headteacher: Mrs R. Hanney  
Inspector's name and number: Mr J.W. Bradley 129

#### **School Context**

Kirk Smeaton Primary School currently has 83 pupils on roll, principally serves its village to the south east of Pontefract and is situated very close to its church. A small number of pupils attend from neighbouring villages and some of their parents choose the school for its Christian ethos. The great majority of the pupils are white British and none speak English as an additional language. The headteacher has been in post for one year.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Kirk Smeaton Primary School as a Church of England School are good.**

Kirk Smeaton Primary School is described by many as a place where 'every child really does matter'. There is a renewed sense of church school distinctiveness and of a will and determination to move this aspect forward. Headteacher, staff, governors, incumbent and church members are of one mind in their desire to provide a high quality Christian based education for every pupil.

#### **Established strengths**

- The relationships evident throughout the school which are based upon clear Christian values.
- The support now evident from governors and church.
- The ways in which charitable giving is linked to different cultures, providing pupils with a clear perspective of others' needs.

#### **Focus for development**

- Governors to regularly and formally evaluate their church school distinctiveness
- Current evaluations of worship to be extended to staff and governing body.
- To make clear links for worship purposes between Christian aspects and the 'Social and Emotional aspects of Learning'.

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

Pupils at this school know they attend a church school and that it is important. Displays and artefacts throughout the building make clear to pupils, parents and visitors that church school status is afforded high prominence. 'We pray for other people' sums up the attitude engendered by this school's outstanding work in raising awareness of other's problems and needs. The school's recent 'Fair Trade' week has had a significant impact upon pupils' knowledge and how they and their parents can help alleviate suffering. Multi-cultural weeks are well planned to increase pupil understanding of those in other places. The school is very much part of its community and approximately fifty per cent of church members are regular visitors to help in school and listen to readers. A monthly contribution to the village magazine keeps local people aware of what is happening in school as do regular displays of pupils' work in church. Joint church school activities also raise pupils' awareness of the important links between the two. Outstanding use is being made by staff and governors of the 'Every Child Matters' agenda and as it is linked very clearly to the promotion of Christian values throughout the school parents are made very aware of what the school stands for and the affect it has upon their children. It is this ethos, so clearly demonstrated, that 'attracts parents to our school'. The teaching of religious education also clearly links with whole school ethos and Christian values appropriate for pupils. There is a genuine sense of Christian inclusivity, described by the incumbent as a place where 'all children flourish, whoever they are, because of the character of this school'. Pupils themselves are nurtured and encouraged within an atmosphere based upon the Christian values of love, forgiveness, reconciliation and charity and staff and governors state that 'we are always looking for improvement'.

**The impact of Collective Worship on the school community is good.**

Worship at Kirk Smeaton is an important and valued part of school life. It is genuinely worship, incorporating good focal points, prayer, reflection and song. Older pupils in particular are very clear regarding the distinction made between assembly and worship and this leads to an outstanding atmosphere of a large family community worshipping together. Clear links can be seen between the content of worship and whole school ethos. The theme 'Pathways through Life' clearly linked how the following of the teachings of Christ are important towards the pupils' lives in school and beyond. The worship is well planned and led by all staff. Future planning is to be linked to 'Social and Emotional aspects of Learning' and plans are in place to link this with a Christian focus. The incumbent leads worship regularly, is well known to pupils and Anglican aspects of worship are well served by his contributions. The church's year is closely followed and various church rites and celebrations, such as baptism and marriage, are described and explained. Visitors from other faiths have contributed in outstanding ways towards pupil understanding. Liturgical colours are not currently incorporated as part of the focus table. Evaluations of worship are carried out by pupils and foundation governors and plans are in place to extend this to staff and full governors. Pupil evaluations, derived through the school's use of 'Mind Maps', are particularly well used to assess the impact of worship and are leading towards new developments such as increased pupil participation in planning and delivery and the teaching of more prayers for corporate use.

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

There is a renewed sense of purpose and teamwork from leadership and management with regard to the future of Kirk Smeaton as a church school. The new headteacher is much respected by staff, governors and parents for her work in highlighting the importance of a distinctive Christian identity and its benefits for pupils. Support for this is very clear from church and governors, who now intend to extend their evaluative and monitoring role to regular and formalised discussions of

the impact of church school status. Governors say 'there is now an increasing self-confidence and belief in the values we are encouraging for the children'. Links between school and church are already good and there is now a desire to increase these even further to include more services held in the nearby church. Governors are regular visitors to school and are well known to pupils. They are also becoming increasingly involved in monitoring and evaluative roles, particularly religious education and worship. Following a period of difficulty for leadership and management new appointments to key positions have led towards this renewed sense of purpose. There is much support now in evidence leading towards a genuine Christian school where pupils come first.

July 2008 Kirk Smeaton CE (VC) Primary School, Pontefract, WF8 3JY