

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Lady Elizabeth Hastings Church of England Aided Primary School

Green Lane,
Ledston
Nr Castleford,
WF10 2BD

Diocese: York

Local authority: Leeds
Dates of inspection: 19 September 2007
Date of last inspection: 2,4,6 June 2003
School's unique reference number: 108100
Headteacher: Mrs V West
Inspector's name and number: Allan Summers 281

School context

Situated in an idyllic, rural setting within the ancient village of Ledston, Lady E Hastings CE Primary School serves not only the rural community nearby but increasingly parts of Castleford and east Leeds. This well resourced and popular school of 111 children enjoys spacious new buildings recently extended. The intake is predominantly white British.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Lady Elizabeth Hastings Church of England Aided Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

Lady E Hastings CE Primary School exudes an atmosphere of warmth, love, care and prayerful Christian witness. The children are happy, articulate, enjoy the challenges set and achieve highly. Said one child, "we work hard in school, and what makes our school a happy place is that teachers make sure we have a fun time". Staff are led whole heartedly by a most dedicated headteacher and the team together with governors and parents share a unity of purpose and a vision for the furtherance of high quality Christian education. The whole learning community lives out its mission in a profoundly caring fashion with collective worship at its heart.

Established strengths

- The quality and strength of relationships between all sections of the learning community;
- A dedicated, collegiate, highly motivated and very well led staff team supported by a governing body, which shares the same traits.
- The Christian ethos based on shared values, which pervades every aspect of the life of the school and in which all pupils feel safe, nurtured and valued.
- Very well behaved and responsive pupils with a remarkable sense of personal responsibility and their place in a global perspective.

Focus for development

- Implement a comprehensive but realistically manageable assessment scheme for RE.
- Put in place a systematic, regular and recorded feedback from children for collective worship.

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

Visitors get an immediate and clear affirmation of the Christian character of the school through interactive, informative and celebratory displays, with beautifully arranged Christian artefacts. The Christian ethos is very strong; staff share a commitment to the Christian faith and ensure a continuum of care, parents remark about it, many choosing the school for this very reason and children benefit from the warm family atmosphere. "The teachers are fab", and "Christianity helps to focus children on a firm set of values for life", were just two of many

words of praise for the character of the school. Social Services regularly place vulnerable children at the school trusting in the careful nurture they will receive.. Children are able to articulate the special nature of their school, talk with affection about it and the unique legacy of which they are beneficiaries and stewards. They talk about care for one another and joy for the process of learning and understand prayer even at a young age. Classrooms all have quiet, peace and prayer corners with collections of 'homemade' prayers for a variety of occasions, enhancing pupils' spiritual development. The school works hard to know and meet the needs of all learners and a strong learning support backs up a tireless teaching team. There is an inclusiveness to which all subscribe with a very strong emphasis on empowering pupils and parents in the process of self evaluation which contributes greatly to children's feeling of value and worth. The school espouses positive attitudes, high standards and behaviour is excellent; smiles abound and there is a sense of calm, purposeful endeavour.

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

Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and as such forms a key element in the school's Christian witness. Diligent work by the coordinator has established a clear, comprehensive, imaginative policy with well considered themes and strategies for planning, organisation, involvement, monitoring and review, which should now include regular and systematic feedback from children, who do speak about worship as providing a special time for them each day. Delivery of worship is enriched by the variety of personnel involved in leading it, which may include clergy, staff and visitors. Parents welcome and value the opportunity, each week to worship and celebrate successes with their children. Artefacts are lovingly transferred from the entrance to provide a focal point for the worship; children enter and leave in respectful silence with music, often chosen by them, providing a prayerful ambience. They interact with the worship leader enthusiastically and sing with real verve. Though a multi purpose hall is not necessarily conducive to reverence and spirituality the demeanour of the children, their spontaneity and calm produced a special atmosphere; children and staff linking hands in during the Lord's Prayer was particularly moving. The distance to Church makes its use difficult except for special occasions such as Christmas when there is standing room only but uniquely the Bishop conducts confirmation, now popular in its uptake for year 6 children in school.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

Religious Education, which is accorded a position of importance in the school curriculum is planned carefully and delivered enthusiastically using a variety of techniques and state of the art resources. It is well funded and the coordinator works hard to support colleagues, keeping them abreast of developments through training and individual attention. Children acknowledge the importance of RE in their school, work well and treasure the two bibles they receive, an infant one as they start in reception year and a "grown up one" when they leave for high school. Progress is good and carefully tracked with attainment in line with core subjects. Written work is of a high standard, well presented and celebrated, where appropriate, in displays. Assessment is informing the planning processes, but work is ongoing to find the most effective means of recording attitudes to aspects of RE especially those which contribute to the spiritual and moral development of learners. The school's links with communities in distant lands gives children a greater feel for their place in the world and consideration for other cultures and faiths but they do articulate that, "learning lots about Jesus helps you to know how to live your life", and, "as you get older you learn a deeper meaning".

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

Led by a determined and inspirational headteacher, the staff and Governors share a unity of purpose and a clear vision for the continued success of the school. The head has gathered around her a happy, motivated, enthusiastic team, which has created a learning community rooted in the Christian faith which can be "proud of the quality of love and care extended to all its members". Structures and systems are robustly in place to continue to deliver high quality education underpinned by Christian values and the governing body reinforces this situation by carrying out its responsibilities to challenge and support with sensitivity and rigour. Though the 'home' church is some distance from school, church status is crucially

important and strenuous efforts are made to maintain close links; the school receives regular mention in prayer, parochial council meetings and the parish magazine. Displays are mounted by the school in church and through confirmation links are being forged with other parishes too. The school is held in high regard within the locality and occupies a position of popularity and trust with parents who overwhelmingly endorse the excellent work of the school. "My children come home happy and motivated eager to tell me what they've learnt today", "a delightful school which we're all fortunate to be part of".

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