

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Little Plumstead Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Witton Lane
Little Plumstead
Norfolk
NR13 5DL

Diocese: Norwich

Local authority: Norfolk
Dates of inspection: Tuesday, 3rd July, 2007
Date of last inspection: January, 2002
School's unique reference number: 121119
Headteacher: Mrs Linda Phillips
Inspector's name and number: Mrs D Lenton 460

School context

Little Plumstead Church of England School is a small Primary school on the outskirts of Norwich in the village of Little Plumstead. The majority of the pupils come from the village, with some coming from beyond the catchment area. Nearly all the pupils are White British, a few from other White backgrounds. All pupils have English as their first language.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Little Plumstead as a Church of England school are outstanding.

Little Plumstead Church of England school is firmly rooted in distinctive Christian values and is very effective in the provision that it makes for all those within the school community. This is achieved through the strong and committed leadership and management team of the head teacher and governing body, very well supported by a strong, whole school team. This group has a clear Christian vision for the school in which individuals can develop within an atmosphere of mutual respect and love.

Established strengths

- The leadership of the head teacher and the strength of the whole school team, committed to the Christian aims and vision of the school
- The excellent relationships between staff, children, parents and governors
- The high standard of the work displayed in the school
- Prayer support of the local church community

Focus for development

- Keep a record of significant milestones in children's spiritual development
- Develop a more rigorous assessment of children's progress in Religious Education
- Clearly demonstrate the link with the local church community through use of displays in both school and church settings

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

On entering Little Plumstead Church of England School it becomes immediately apparent that the strong Christian ethos permeates every aspect of its life. This is a school rooted in Christian aims and values. These aims are clearly displayed around the school. The children spoke highly of their school and some described it as a Christian school. One child commented that the teachers help them to develop their skills and become more confident. He said that teachers stick to the school's motto "Where Children come First".

Parents spoke highly of the school and said that the children demonstrate respect for each other and adults. This is strongly endorsed by the inspector: children were seen to be polite

and considerate to those around them. The Chair of governors commented that Christianity pervades all the subjects and that this creates a safe and secure environment in which children can thrive.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong, and was also recognised by the recent Ofsted report. Their use of Quiet Garden "Buddies" is an excellent method of giving children space to think and be still. The School Council takes a very strong lead in the school. They are given many excellent opportunities to make decisions and they demonstrate a very mature attitude to their role. They recently attended a convention about bullying and they are in the middle of making a Friendship Tree. The "Why?" box gives children an excellent opportunity to write down any concerns that they have which can be discussed later in school and class councils. The children are sensitive to the needs of others and support an "adopted" child in Bangladesh, for example.

There is evidence of strong parental support in the school, from helping in the classroom to the very effective Friends committee. The results of their fund-raising activities can be seen around the school, including interactive white boards and the impressive Quiet Garden. Parents are kept very well informed about their children's progress through several formal and informal drop-in sessions. However, parents emphasised that they feel able to approach any member of staff at any time if they have any concerns.

The school is very good at helping children with Special Educational Needs. These children make better than average progress while in the school. All kinds of good achievement are recognised by the school through special awards and tokens and through special achievement assemblies. There are also good opportunities provided for children who have particular gifts. So, for example, higher achievers in mathematics and science can attend extension classes at the High school. The high quality of the displays emphasises how the children's work is valued throughout the school. There is also a very wide range of extra-curricular opportunities for all the children to access.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective Worship is seen as central to the life of the school. The children see it as a time to talk to God and appreciate all that He has done. Their views of this time were very positive. Their ability to discuss prayer was particularly striking, with a well thought out philosophy of how and why God answered prayers. Prayer is also used regularly in each class at the end of each day, as well as before lunch.

The children entered the hall very quietly and respectfully and listened attentively throughout the Collective Worship. This time was very moving, particularly the singing of the Lord's prayer. There was a real sense of God's presence. The children are able to focus on a lighted candle and a cross carefully displayed on a table. This very effectively transforms a hall that is used for PE and school dinners into an area for worship.

Children are very involved in leading collective worship. The evidence of their quiet confidence in handling music for the CD player was particularly noticeable. They read Bible passages and say prayers. All the staff lead Collective Worship, which is well organised and planned in detail by the head teacher and the coordinator. There is a strong emphasis on evaluation from both children and adults. The local rector monitors CW, along with the Foundation governors, who have a strong influence in its direction. The local rector also leads CW once a week.

Christian festivals are regularly celebrated in school including Easter, Christmas, Lent, Advent and Harvest. The local churches are used well throughout the year, for some services such as mothering Sunday as well as part of the Religious Education curriculum. Parents attend class assemblies. These are well supported.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious Education has a high profile within the school curriculum. All the staff consider it to be an important core subject in the school and have already implemented the new agreed syllabus for Norfolk into their planning. The RE coordinator says that all the staff work well

together. There is an effective programme of monitoring by the coordinator and the local rector, based on careful observations and feedback, although a more rigorous approach to assessment would give very clear indications of children's progress, compared with other core subjects. Children said that they enjoyed RE, in spite of the SEF's own findings through their surveys.

The school teaches other faiths alongside Christianity very well. Good examples of this work could be seen in the form of interesting displays around the school. Two good Religious Education lessons were observed. One class has been learning about what Hindus believe. There was a strong emphasis on learning not only *about* but also *from* this faith. The children were encouraged to consider what is good about their own character in discussing the character of Krishna. Their lively discussion demonstrated their knowledge from previous learning and they could see the parallels with the life of Jesus and Moses. The young children in the second class were particularly good at recalling the names of different places inside their local church, such as the lectern and the altar. The children's enthusiasm and evidence of learning was very good.

The speaking and listening aspect of RE is considered by the coordinator to be good and the children were seen to be comfortable talking about Jesus and God as part of their natural every-day language.

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

The leadership and management of this church school are extremely good. The Foundation governors and the head teacher, with the whole school team, have a clear and committed Christian vision for the school. All the staff are excellent role models for the children. The head teacher says that there is an expectation on the part of the children for teachers to talk about their faith. The very good relationships within the school are very evident. The school is committed to the Norfolk Well-Being Project as well as having received Investors in People and the Quality Mark.

The governors have instigated thorough monitoring procedures, and Performance Management is well established. Each governor has a responsibility for a particular area of the curriculum. Observations of lessons are fed back to the staff through the head teacher. The leadership team has worked well together to complete the Self Evaluation Form and has been careful to accurately assess the school's position, although the Inspector feels they have underestimated their performance in their effectiveness in leading and managing the school as a church school.

The local rector has a very strong and supportive role in the school. He considers this involvement a priority in his work in the parish. He has a strong pastoral role within the school as well as supporting the school weekly through leading Collective Worship and through helping out on school trips and sports' days. The head teacher meets weekly with the chair of governors and rector to pray for the school. The links with the local church community are good and the school is regularly mentioned in the parish magazine. Some governors are also members of the Parochial Church Council. The Foundation governors are proactive in promoting the school as a church school. One governor described herself as "passionate" about the school.

By 2009 the whole school expects to move into a brand new building next to Little Plumstead Church. The building of a new school demonstrates the excellent relationship between the school and the local community. The Governors alongside the Parochial Church Council, the Parish Council and the Friends of the School have collaborated to get the site on which the school will be built. The local rector described getting the money required for the funding of this project as "miraculous".