

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Loddington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Main Street
Loddington
Northamptonshire
NN14 1LA

Diocese:

Peterborough

Local authority:

Northamptonshire

Dates of inspection:

19 March 2008

Date of last inspection:

2 February 2004

School's unique reference number:

121981

Headteacher:

Mrs Sue Walters

Inspector's name and number:

Mr Keith Brammer 334

School context

Loddington primary school is a small, rural school in Northamptonshire; its 58 pupils are taught in three mixed age classes. The school also attracts a few pupils from neighbouring villages and the local market town of Rothwell; most are from white British backgrounds. The head teacher is now in her third year at the school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Loddington Primary School are good

This is a good and improving church school. Outstanding leadership and total commitment by the headteacher and the priest-in-charge of St Leonard's church, ensure that the beliefs, teachings and values of the Anglican Church fully permeate every aspect of the school's work and that the special talents of each pupil are fully valued and developed in a caring, supportive, happy and distinctive Christian atmosphere.

Established strengths

- Loddington is an improving church school being driven forward by the outstanding leadership and vision of the headteacher and the strong pastoral support and inspiration of the priest-in-charge
- Impressive links with St Leonard's church and the community provide rich opportunities for pupils to develop, demonstrate and share their Christian witness
- Pupils' behaviour, their relationships and personal development are good because they receive high quality pastoral and spiritual care which are clearly based on Christian values

Focus for development

- Make the monitoring and evaluating of the school's work as a church school more systematic and rigorous
- Ensure that the school's distinctive Christian characteristics and objectives are made fully explicit in its prospectus and all other documentation.

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

The school's distinctive Christian ethos is immediately evident in all aspects of school life, from symbols, texts, artwork and displays through to the good relationships between pupils. The welcoming, bright and happy atmosphere encourages them to work cheerfully and effectively together. They say that adults listen to them and that they feel safe, special and valued and know that their beliefs are respected. The high quality of pastoral care and support provided by the priest-in-charge and staff ensures that friendships and attitudes are impressive. Pupils readily see themselves as members of

God's family, and this is reflected in their relationships and the prayers they write. These all show that Christian values, such as love, care, kindness, sharing, forgiveness, trust, tolerance, respect and mutual support are at the heart of the school. Consequently, older pupils readily take responsibility for helping and guiding the younger ones, through being playground buddies and play leaders, for example; and all know right from wrong. This ensures that behaviour and attitudes are always at least good. These qualities are promoted and rewarded, along with academic achievement, in weekly celebration assemblies to which parents are invited. Pupils' views are sought through the School Council and suggestion boxes, and all pupils have a mature concern for the school, local community and the wider world; for example, through their recent 'Fair Trade' project. School data show that all age and ability groups, including those with special needs, achieve well; and the Ofsted report (2008) recognises the contribution of the caring, nurturing atmosphere to pupils' personal development and well-being. All pupils respond well to a good range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is impressive. This is because they regularly experience planned cultural, ethnic and religious diversity through worship, religious education (RE), school visits, twinning links with a predominantly Muslim school in Yorkshire and Emmanuel School in Nepal, and a range of visiting artists and performers. These experiences are augmented by a good curriculum, including French, drama and music, and an increasingly rich and well-attended range of lunchtime and after school activities.

The impact of collective worship is good

Worship is well planned by the headteacher and priest-in-charge. Pupils say that they look forward to worship and find it worthwhile and rewarding because they enjoy singing, hearing Bible stories, 'learning about Jesus' and sharing the service with adults, including teachers and governors, who sometimes lead it. One very good act of worship, taken by the headteacher, was seen. Pupils entered the room quietly and respectfully as music, artwork, flowers, Christian symbols and lighted candles established an atmosphere appropriate for reverence and contemplation. The parable of the vineyard was effectively linked to Maundy Thursday and pupils of all ages were motivated to participate eagerly in the vivid story telling and, through skilled questioning by the headteacher, were able to link this to the theme of God's generosity. Pupils reflected on the story and then extemporarily prayed aloud for others, before singing, *Our God is a great big God* and *The Lord's Prayer*. Their thorough engagement, confidence and sincere and joyful singing made it an uplifting and spiritual occasion and, say pupils, this was quite typical of daily worship. Older pupils say that they welcome the regular opportunities provided in worship for reflection and see them as valuable times for personal thinking. Pupils are becoming more aware of different styles and approaches to Christianity, through links with other churches and visiting speakers, and themes are well linked to their daily lives, the Church's calendar, the Every Child Matters agenda and current events. The whole school community, including parents, celebrates key Christian festivals in the church; and the priest-in-charge, or curate, takes a weekly act of worship and a termly Eucharist. Pupils particularly appreciate opportunities to lead worship themselves, and to write and share their own prayers and drama scripts. Prayer is a central part of their worship and pupils regularly pray aloud for each other and write prayers for the notice boards and prayer tree. In discussion, they can demonstrate very well how their participation enhances their understanding of Christianity, and their awareness of what their faith means to them. Although the priest-in-charge observes worship periodically and senior pupils keep a daily record, the monitoring and evaluation are not rigorous enough to ensure that both standards and impact are consistently high.

The leadership and management of the school as a Church school are good

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and is responsible for an eager buzz and air of optimism throughout the school community. Parents say: 'Two years ago, this was a Church school in name only' and the chair of governors states that, the head 'has brought about a significant and welcome sea-change. The staff are now a team pulling together.' A superb role model, with a strong personal faith, she works closely with the priest-in-charge, who is a foundation governor and provides invaluable pastoral and spiritual support and inspiration to both staff and pupils. The chairman wants Loddington to be an excellent example of an effective Church school, and the new mission statement, devised by the governors and staff, ensures that everyone now knows and shares the headteacher's vision for the school. The teaching staff's commitment to providing the best possible educational experiences for every child is readily seen in their high expectations of themselves and their pupils. Management is effective; all issues from the previous inspection have been well dealt with and the

school's self-evaluation is accurate; however, although governors monitor its work through observations and discussions, they admit that their evaluation of the school's Christian dimension needs to be more systematic and rigorous; for example, its Christian distinctiveness and objectives are not yet fully reflected in its documentation, particularly in the prospectus. RE is well taught and makes a significant contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding of Biblical teaching and the school's Christian ethos. In a recent questionnaire, parents praise highly the school's very special qualities, such as the dedication of all the staff, which enables children to flourish individually and make the most of their talents. As one parent puts it: 'I'm so glad I moved my daughter to this school. Every child there is known, valued and cherished.' This is obvious in the Christian family atmosphere which pervades the school. Partnerships with St Leonard's church, other local schools and the community are impressive. The church is very well-used as a learning resource and provides good curriculum enrichment in RE, art, music and history, for example; presently it contains good displays of pupils' banners and prayers. Pupils take an active part in family and other regular services, through reading, singing and serving refreshments, and the congregation is rising as more children take their parents to church. They also show their Christian witness through regularly campaigning for, and generously giving to, a wide range of local and national charities. Older pupils in particular welcome the changes they have seen recently, and all are rightly proud of their school.

SIAS report March 2008 Loddington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
NN14 1LA