

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Longford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Longford
Ashbourne
Derbyshire
DE6 3DR

Diocese: Derby

Local authority: Derbyshire

Dates of inspection: January 19th 2007

Date of last inspection: 2002

School's unique reference number: 112835

Headteacher: Mrs Margaret Matthews

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Kate Gough 257

School context

This is a very small village Primary School with 62 children presently on roll, all white British. The school serves a wide catchment area; most families are from agricultural or professional backgrounds. There are three mixed-age classes and all teaching staff job-share; the head teacher has a 0.6 teaching commitment. The Victorian building has been extended to provide additional classroom space and administrative areas, yet retains its distinctive character. The local church, St. Chad's is part of a very large rural team ministry. There is a vacancy for the post of Foundation governor.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Longford CE Primary School as a Church of England school are good

This is a good Church School with some outstanding features. Working in close partnership with the local church and community it is committed to the development and education of the whole child. Christian principles underpin the distinctive atmosphere of mutual respect and care for each individual.

Established strengths

- Strong, enthusiastic leadership and teamwork
- An awareness of other cultures and the needs of the wider world results in generous giving.
- A mutually supportive working partnership with the Vicar, the local church and the community
- Effective systems in place for planning, recording and monitoring Collective Worship

Focus for development

- Create a sense of "Sacred Space" within the multi-purpose room used for Collective Worship
- Include issues relating to the school's Christian Foundation in questionnaires
- Enhance awareness of the world-wide church by developing an overseas link with a school or project

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

A well-thought out display and a cross in the entrance area draws attention to the school's Christian Foundation. The school's ethos statement clearly defines the distinctive quality of a Church School. Christian values impact on behaviour and attitudes creating a calm, supportive working environment and a secure and happy family atmosphere. The children are open, friendly and articulate and welcome visitors with respect and enthusiasm. Parents

speaking effusively of the caring ethos within the school and appreciate the distinctive qualities of this church school. Issues such as anti-bullying, recycling and healthy lifestyles are taken seriously and the whole school work co-operatively to achieve awards. A "Buddy Bench" and Friendship Stop", bought in memory of a school family member, encourage children to show practical care for each other in the playground. The introduction of Circle time has given children confidence in expressing their feelings and concerns within a supportive atmosphere.

There is a strong emphasis on social, moral and cultural development but issues relating particularly to spiritual development in children have not been explored. Cultural awareness is seen as crucial and there is investment in providing opportunities for visits to places of worship and cultural centres in the city and for workshop experiences to take place in school. Generous fund-raising results from raised awareness of the needs of others. A link with a world-church establishment has been identified as the next step forward.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is well planned and monitored and there is a balance between whole-school acts of worship and key-stage gatherings. All teaching staff lead key-stage worship and feel well-supported and resourced. They all attend whole school worship when there is a visitor. All KS2 children are involved in leading worship on a regular basis, either in groups or as individuals; these do not always follow religious themes and while worthwhile for many reasons, they are not seen as distinctive times of worship. Children have recently been asked for their views on Collective Worship in school and generally responded positively. Most expressed their preference for the more interactive occasions, but all valued the opportunity to learn about God and reflect on what they had learned. The children love to sing and have been introduced to a range of Christian music.

Visits from the Vicar and Assembly Teams contribute to the richness in variety of expressions of worship. Behaviour is always good and there is a sense of stillness but there is no significant visual focus to help create a distinctive sense of "sacred space" in the multi-purpose room.

Worship takes place in the village church three times a year and both church and school positively encourage more regular involvement in services. Family Services are well attended and children take pride in reading the lesson there and at the Annual Carol Service. Parents appreciate these occasions, and that their children feel "comfortable" in church.

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

The head teacher, staff and governors work together exceptionally well to manage the school and they form a strong team, together with parents, church and local community. Parents and staff comment on the excellent relationships which exist, describing school as "an extended family, overlapping into the community." They are regularly consulted on their views through questionnaires and surveys and their opinions are valued, reported in the school newsletter and acted upon as appropriate. Specific church school-related topics have not been included as yet. The introduction of a School Council has given the children a feeling of empowerment.

The Vicar is regarded as an "extremely supportive friend of the school" who is always there when needed, despite being responsible for other schools and seven other churches! School news is regularly included in church and village publications and discussed, as appropriate, at PCC meetings. The church family regularly pray for the school and feel a sense of ownership of it.

The head teacher regularly meets with other church-school heads and she values Diocesan training opportunities. Together with an excellent RE co-ordinator she supports and monitors Collective Worship and RE and ensures that it is well resourced.