

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Lowdham Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Main Street
Lowdham
Nottingham
Nottinghamshire
NG14 7BE

Diocese: Southwell & Nottingham

Local authority: Nottingham
Date of Inspection: 13th June 2007
Date of last inspection: October 2003
School's unique reference number: 122806
Headteacher: Mr Richard Amies
Inspector's name and number: Mr John Horwood NS177

School context

Lowdham Church of England School is a medium size and popular school of 204 pupils taught in single year group classes. Most pupils are of British origin and very few have English as an additional first language. The school is in a rural location catering for the needs of children in local villages. Children are of broadly average ability when they join the school in Reception and achieve above average standards by the time they leave. The local Church of St Mary is in the same village but separated from the school by a very busy main road with no easy pedestrian route.

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

Lowdham school is distinctive because it provides a calm learning environment where pupils feel safe and happy. It is effective because every child is provided with good and sensitive guidance and support to help them develop fully within an inclusive environment. Christian values are inherent in all the procedures and activities within the school and the staff provide good role models to support these values.

Established strengths

- The caring and loving ethos in the school where relationships are outstanding
- Enabling all children to achieve well both academically and through their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The contribution made to spiritual development by religious education lessons.
- The good partnership between the staff, the governors and the church

Focus for development

- Improve the impact of collective worship by improving the audio-visual contribution to the occasion and increasing the opportunities for pupils to take part in the organisation of worship
- Use diocesan training opportunities to help all staff further develop their skills at leading collective worship.

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

The headteacher is very focussed on supporting the pupils and all adults in the school set high standards through their expectations and by being good role models. There is total commitment to developing the whole child and parents identify this as a special feature of the school. Every aspect of school life reflects its foundation on Christian beliefs. All pupils are secure and happy in an environment where outstanding relationships generate mutual trust

and respect. They are polite, well mannered and friendly. Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibility to support their personal development and many take on roles such as supporting others on the playground or being part of the school council. Pupils' outstanding attitudes and behaviour ensure total harmony which enables them all to enjoy their lessons, to work hard and achieve well. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils is outstanding and is well supported by the religious education provision, the personal, social and health education provision and environmental studies. The school is very welcoming to parents and they are very pleased with what the school provides for their children.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The school policy is to refer to all the daily acts of collective worship as assemblies but to clearly identify the period of worship within them. There are three whole school assemblies and two key stage assemblies each week and these are appreciated by pupils, staff and parents. The Friday assembly celebrates pupils' achievements and as well as the local vicar leading a weekly assembly speakers from other denominations lead assemblies regularly. Whilst the planning of assemblies is good and the themes linked to the curriculum the formal monitoring and analysis by the governors is not fully established. All staff attend the assemblies and take turns in leading the key stage assemblies thereby setting good role models to the pupils. Pupils experience other types of worship by attending a service in the local church twice a year in the evenings but the location of the church the other side of a busy road prevents similar daytime services taking places. After the 'leavers' assembly', pupils are presented with a Bible signed by the vicar and a book of Bible readings by the governors further supporting their links with the Christian faith. Daytime whole school assemblies are held in the multi-function school hall which is adapted well but has limited audio visual facilities. The content of the assemblies contributes well to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils enjoy the assemblies and show respect; they join in prayers and songs with enthusiasm but few are directly involved in the organisation of the worship. The in service training on collective worship has been limited to the headteacher. Other opportunities for prayer and reflection occur during the day with 'Grace' being said before lunch and a prayer being said at the end of the day. Each classroom has a prayer corner where pupils can quietly reflect during the day if they wish.

The effectiveness of religious education (RE) is good

The new coordinator for the subject has been well trained and has very good subject knowledge enabling her to carry out her role well. RE has a high profile within the school which is reflected by its prominence in the prospectus and the attention paid to it by governors. The local vicar is the link governor and is a regular visitor to the classroom providing support and developing links between the church and the pupils. Although formal assessment is limited at this stage all teachers are very aware of pupils' knowledge and progress. Pupils achieve at least as well in RE as in other subjects. Lessons seen during the inspection confirm the school's judgements that teaching and learning in RE are good and that the pupils benefit from enjoyable lessons which make good use of information and communications technology. Within lessons pupils have good opportunities to think about issues and discuss them developing further their spiritual development. Pupils are also given the opportunity to visit, for example, Southwell Minster to enhance the curriculum. Spiritual, moral and social development as a result of the RE provision are outstanding. Other faiths and cultures are examined as part of the RE provision. The previous inspection report recommended that number of non-Christian religious faiths studied in RE should be reduced. Having reviewed the curriculum the school decided that because of the rural location of the school pupils would continue to benefit from this broader provision of faith studies. This view is accepted. The strength of the moral and social provision is reflected by the way pupils can talk openly about their own and other's disabilities.

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

The staff and governors have successfully developed the school into a good church school to meet the needs of pupils in the area. The headteacher, supported by the governors, has

ensured that Christian values are fundamental to its success. The prospectus clearly identifies to parents that the school is a church school and what this means. Staff take an active role in providing collective worship but have not yet had the opportunity for detailed recent training to help them. The local vicar is a regular visitor to school to take assemblies and to support RE for which she is the link governor. This is part of a good partnership with the church which is only limited because of safety issues associated with pupils crossing the busy main road to get there. Opportunities are taken wherever possible to broaden pupils' understanding of other denominations by inviting representatives into assemblies or to visit the school at other times. The foundation governors provide good support to the school and are actively involved in activities. The chair of governors, the vicar and the foundation governors share the same vision for the school and in preparation for the imminent retirement of the present headteacher have appointed a new headteacher to build on the present strengths and to develop the school still further as a church school. The issues from the last inspection have been considered and appropriate action taken.

SIAS report June 2007 Lowdham CE Primary School, Nottinghamshire NG14 7BE