

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools

Netherseal Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Main Street

Netherseal

Swadlincote DE12 8BZ

Diocese:

Derby

Local authority:

Derbyshire

Dates of inspection:

17 September 2007

Date of last inspection:

June 2003

School's unique reference number:

112814

Headteacher:

Mrs Sue Brindley

Inspector's name and number:

Mr Keith Brammer 334

School context

This small, rural primary school, with 61 pupils, is situated close to the borders of Leicestershire and Warwickshire. Three out of four of its pupils currently come from Netherseal and increasing numbers are now being admitted from neighbouring villages, all of which share the same broadly average social and economic characteristics. Most pupils are from white British backgrounds.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Netherseal Primary School are good

Strong leadership and commitment by the Headteacher and Chair of governors ensure that the beliefs, teachings and values of the Anglican Church permeate all aspects of the school's work and that it successfully develops the special talents of each pupil in a caring, supportive and happy Christian atmosphere.

Established strengths

- Pupils' behaviour and relationships are excellent and their personal development and relationships are clearly based on Christian values
- The high quality of care and guidance ensures that pupils of all abilities and needs feel welcome and secure and enables them to contribute to its happy, family atmosphere in which learning is enjoyable and rewarding
- The Headteacher and Chair of governors have a shared vision of the school as a Church school and provide strong leadership which results in very high levels of parental satisfaction

Focus for development

- Develop and strengthen the roles of the clergy and the foundation governor to ensure that links with St Peter's church are more productive
- Monitor and evaluate pupils' social, moral, spiritual, and cultural development more rigorously

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

The Christian ethos is witnessed in most aspects of school life, from symbols, texts, artwork and impressive displays through to the behaviour and attitudes of the pupils. The welcoming, bright, happy and secure atmosphere encourages pupils to work cheerfully and effectively together. They know that their beliefs are respected and that they themselves are special and valued. This is evident from the excellent relationships between pupils and the high quality of care and support provided by all adults. The school prayer asks: "Help us to remember that WE have the power to make this school what WE want it to be," and this attitude, together with initiatives such as the

buddy system, and the provision of books for children in war zones, strongly promotes Christian values, such as love, care, sharing, forgiveness, trust, tolerance, respect and mutual support. As a result, these qualities are at the heart of the school and older pupils readily take responsibility for helping and guiding the younger ones; and all know right from wrong. Everyone expects behaviour and attitudes to be excellent, and they are because school rules stress positive behaviour; and this is rewarded, along with pupils' achievement, in weekly Celebration Assemblies. Pupils' views are sought through the elected School Council and these pupils have a mature concern for the whole school community. The caring, nurturing atmosphere is recognised by the Local Authority (LA) as underpinning the school's success with children with special needs. Because of this, excluded, hard to place and looked after children are accepted and thrive. Pupils respond well to a good range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is good. Whilst they experience cultural, ethnic and religious diversity through Worship, Religious Education, school visits and links with other Christian churches, their SMSC development is not explicitly planned, nor monitored, in all curriculum areas.

The impact of collective worship is good

Worship is well planned and regularly evaluated and has an important place in school life. Pupils say that they look forward to it and find it enjoyable. One 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 conducive to responses of reverence and contemplation. They eagerly showed their knowledge of St Peter and commented maturely on why we need to feed animals in the winter; they were also able to link the subject with their work on conservation and their concern for God's created world. Finally, they prayed sincerely before joyfully singing, "He's got the whole World in His hand". Pupils like Worship because they enjoy singing, hearing Bible stories, "learning about people who inspire us" and sharing the service with a range of adults, including governors and parents who sometimes lead it. Older pupils welcome the opportunities for reflection which are always provided as valuable times for personal thinking. Pupils are aware of different styles and approaches to Christianity, through close links with the local Baptist church, for example; but the school has difficulty with finding visitors of other faiths to speak to the children. Themes are often linked to pupils' daily lives, the Every Child Matters agenda and current events. The whole school community, including parents, celebrates most key Christian festivals, such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest, in the church; but the vicar does not regularly take an Act of Worship in the school. Pupils particularly appreciate the regular opportunities to lead Worship themselves, and to write and share their own prayers and drama scripts. In discussion, pupils can demonstrate very well how their participation enhances their understanding of the Christian faith, through exploring the meaning of charity, for example.

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

The Headteacher and the Chair of governors provide strong leadership and share a clear vision of the school as a Church school; this is evident in its documentation and prospectus and in several displays around the school, especially that in the library. The school is well managed and the issues from the previous inspection have been dealt with effectively. All staff are fully committed to providing the best possible educational experiences for every child and have high expectations of themselves and their pupils. As a result, they are an effective, self-evaluating and reflective team. Governors visit the school frequently and are beginning to systematically monitor its Christian dimension through regular observation and discussion. Parents praise highly both the school's very special qualities, such as the great dedication of the teaching and non-teaching staff, which enable all children to flourish as individuals and make the most of their talents. As one parent puts it: "Transferring my daughter to Netherseal has made a world of difference. The buddy system is great and there is absolutely no bullying." Parents' responses to the school's recent questionnaire indicate that they greatly appreciate how it promotes and demonstrates its motto: "Valuing Childhood; Preparing for Life." Parents also praise highly the leadership of both the Headteacher and the new Chair of governors which they say is transforming the school because, in their pursuit of excellence, everyone is benefiting. Links with the village community are very good, especially those with the Leonard Cheshire Home and the Baptist church; and pupils regularly campaign for and give to a wide range of local and national charities. Additionally, a flourishing Parents' and Teachers' Association contributes substantially to both fund-raising and the family atmosphere which pervades the school. Links with the local church are also good; for example, it has recently purchased Bibles for the school, but the links could be improved further. At the moment, the school drives most

initiatives because the new incumbent still has to develop his roles as school governor, and its pastoral and spiritual leader; and the foundation governor has yet to explore fully his responsibilities and produce an action plan approved by the governing body.

SIAS report September 2007 Netherseal Primary (VC) DE12 8BZ