

**Newton Solney Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Trent Lane  
Newton Solney  
Derbyshire  
DE15 0SF

**Diocese: Derby**

LA: Derbyshire

Date of Inspection: March 22<sup>nd</sup> 2007

Dates of last inspection: June 2002

School's Unique Reference Number: 112890

Headteacher: Mrs Linda Latchford

Inspectors' name and number: Margaret Ralph 272

**Context**

Newton Solney is a small village infant school with 42 pupils on roll who come from Newton Solney and surrounding villages. There are very few pupils speaking English as an additional language and the percentage with special educational needs is below average. Staffing is very stable and reflects the commitment to the children by the whole school community.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Newton Solney as a Church of England school are outstanding**

Newton Solney Church of England Infants school is an outstanding school where pupils are nurtured and supported as part of an extended Christian family and community. The headteacher's vision has created a rich learning environment in which children thrive because each individual is valued as a 'child of God'.

**Established strengths**

- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by the staff and Governing Body.
- The very strong and active support of parents for all that the school does and for the impact of the Christian ethos on their children.
- The high quality of teaching in RE and collective worship, leading to very good levels of understanding, achievement and progress

**Focus for development**

- Expand the existing rigorous assessment systems to encourage older pupils to self assess their work.
- When the school has access to broadband develop a web-site so that the many examples of good practice can be shared with other schools.

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

Every child at Newton Solney school is seen and valued as a child of God, and their individual needs are exceptionally well met. The distinctively Christian character of the school is evident from the moment the school building is entered. Christian signs and symbols are very visible and there are many high quality displays related to the themes of collective worship and work in RE. The Christian ethos of the school is tangible and often commented upon by visitors. Parents frequently choose the school because they strongly believe that the ethos and the values underpinning it will give their children the very best start to their education. Children love coming to school, they are happy and secure and speak of seeing it as an extension of their family. Their successes in and out of school are valued and celebrated every Friday when they come together in a special assembly and show genuine

delight in each other's achievements. The school's work and successes also feature in the parish magazine. There is a very strong sense of care and compassion at every level. This is evident in the way these young children take responsibility for each other, ensuring that no-one is without a friend or someone to comfort them if they are distressed. It is also seen in the support they give to those less fortunate than themselves through charitable giving such as in support of the Padley Centre in Derby and the Bishop's harvest appeal for Cambodia.

### **The impact of Collective Worship on the learners is outstanding.**

Collective worship is central to the life of the school and provides a truly meaningful focus to each day, in a setting which encourages reflection and reverence. Worship is carefully planned and regularly evaluated and most staff lead worship once a week. The incumbent and two local worship groups are regular visitors and bring an added and valued dimension to the children's experience. Christian symbols and displays as well as reflective music contribute to the atmosphere and children respond to this with extremely high standards of behaviour and concentration. They sing very well and with obvious enjoyment, and contribute to the theme of the day with thoughtful responses to questions, and a willingness to take part by reading a prayer, contributing to discussion or acting out a role. The pattern of worship reflects Anglican practice, and children are familiar with simple responses such as "the Lord be with you" and a number of prayers, which are also used at lunchtime and the end of the day. Extended families, governors and friends from the local community frequently join the children for worship and speak of how much this means to them. The school community regularly visits church for services to celebrate festivals and particular events such as the leavers' service. These events are seen as very special and are prepared for carefully by staff and children, and extremely well attended by both parents and the parish. The worship coordinator attends Diocesan training and the whole staff have opportunities to attend INSET around worship themes.

### **The effectiveness of Religious Education in the school is very good with many outstanding features.**

RE is given equal status with core subjects and it makes a strong contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the children. Pupils' achievements and progress in both the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are very good. This is because the teaching is extremely well planned, imaginatively delivered and uses questioning skills very effectively to tease out the children's understanding. Lessons are stimulating, they are well resourced and they provide a high level of challenge to the learners, who remain interested and absorbed throughout. Teaching and support staff are skilled in helping children to make connections between what they are learning and their own lives. They also provide opportunities for pupils to withdraw and reflect as part of their activity time, and children use this to record their own thoughts and prayers. Very good use is made of the Diocesan syllabus and QCA guidance in planning lessons, and there are good cross-curricular links. Children learn about Judaism and also celebrated the feast of Divali as part of their work about festivals of light. There are regular opportunities for staff training, both through the Diocese and in-house. The assessment and recording of pupils' work is rigorous and this is a significant factor in the high standards of achievement. Children who had been learning about the Easter story and making Easter gardens had a remarkably good understanding of the concept of betrayal and forgiveness, at their own level. Good use is made of the parish church and older children have a growing awareness of its place in the village community and its use for baptism, marriage and funerals as well as daily worship. They display their work in church from time to time and parishioners appreciate this as another way in which they are involved in the life of the school.

### **Leadership and management of the school as a church school are outstanding.**

The headteacher's leadership is inspirational in that everything that happens in school has a meaning and purpose that is clear and evident to all who work there or visit this vibrant community. She is supported by a strong and active Governing Body who understand their role, are deeply committed to the school and act as true critical friends, challenging and supporting as appropriate. The leadership style is very democratic, encouraging all staff to take a lead in their own area of expertise for the benefit of others; this makes them feel valued and so they give of their best. The headteacher and staff, supported by Governors, are rigorous in their approach to assessment and the monitoring of pupils' achievements. The leadership of RE and collective worship are shared between the

headteacher and a teaching assistant and is extremely effective Pupils are given many opportunities to develop their own leadership skills through being school representatives, helping in collective worship and at playtime and lunchtime. The views of parents are sought through questionnaires and the open door policy which parents' value and use. There are strong links between the school, the parish church and the village community. Local talent is harnessed in support of the school and to widen children's horizons. The local pre-school is about to move to the infant school campus in a move which will enhance the provision of both, will strengthen relationships and ensure smooth transition from one to the other. Progress since the last inspection is very good and the areas for development have been addressed.

SIAS report March 2007 Newton Solney Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School  
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