

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Norbury Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Norbury
Ashbourne
Derbyshire
DE6 2EG

Diocese: Derby

Local authority: Derbyshire
Dates of inspection: 14th June 2007
Date of last inspection: November 2001
School's unique reference number: 112845
Headteacher: Mrs Margaret Shermer
Inspector's name and number: Mr John Horwood NS177

School context

A small primary school in a rural location with 54 children taught in three mixed age classes with additional facilities for Reception children. The current head teacher has been in post since just before the last inspection in 2001. Most pupils are of British origin and very few have English as an additional language. Pupils come from the local area and the surrounding villages. The local church is a significant distance from the school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Norbury Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

The school is distinctive because it welcomes children, parents, and other adults into a caring environment promoted by the Christian values within the school. It is effective because both the headteacher and the governing body are working with enthusiasm and determination to further improve the school for the benefit of the pupils who say they are very happy at the school and that teachers are friendly and helpful.

Established strengths

- Pupils flourish within a secure and supportive environment based on Christian values.
- Outstanding leadership by the headteacher and the governors ensure that the school is an outstanding church school.
- Outstanding relationships exist throughout the school ensuring that a harmonious learning environment exists.

Focus for development

- Provide more frequent opportunities for pupils to organise collective worship.

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

The reputation of the school is very good and many parents travel long distances because it is such an outstanding church school. The Christian character of the school is clearly identified by the prospectus, the school signs, displays and by artefacts around the school. The ethos in the school clearly reflects the Christian values such as love, care, forgiveness and understanding. Staff set good role models for pupils and the outstanding relationships promote mutual respect as well as ensuring a very good learning environment. Being a small school with a family atmosphere means that all the pupils are well known by the caring and supportive staff. Pupils themselves say that the school could not be improved in any way. They are actively involved in supporting the management of the school through the school council and through conversation with the teachers. The school clearly listens to pupils' views and explains why their suggestions cannot be acted on, for example the cost of a swimming pool being too high! Pupils' successes are recognised and celebrated well through the rewards system. Good spiritual and moral development are clearly demonstrated by the

pupils' caring attitudes and peer support especially at times of illness or injury. The religious education lessons make a very good contribution to spiritual development especially through 'activity type' lessons. A lesson seen during the inspection showed that pupils are encouraged to understand other faiths whilst looking at links to Christianity and photographs in an album show how younger pupils marvelled at enjoying their own enactment of a 'Passover feast'. Pupils show a keen involvement with the community through charity fundraising including supporting the annual Harvest Festival. They also have direct involvement with the local community during the Norbury well-dressing. Attendance at the local church is limited to a few services each year because of the distance to travel to get there but it is well used as part of the curriculum to make pupils aware of Anglican traditions. Awareness of other faiths and traditions is supported by visiting speakers, a visit by pupils from an inner city school and through lessons. There are no places of worship of other faiths in the local area but visits to places of worship in Derby are organised.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Pupils use the word assembly for the daily worship but the school ensures that the actual period of worship is clearly identified by, for example, the lighting of candles. The school does not have a school hall but makes very good use of the junior classrooms which are combined for assemblies. In order to save time and to allow pupils to sit comfortably the furniture is not rearranged but a cross and candles are used effectively to identify the respectful atmosphere expected. Music is also very well used to develop the atmosphere and pupils respond with outstanding attitudes and behaviour. Throughout the assembly seen they showed enjoyment and enthusiasm to participate. A school survey shows that pupils value and enjoy assemblies and those spoken to readily recalled past assemblies that they had enjoyed. The fact that they can recall past assemblies and identify the content and the meaning so readily demonstrates that the outstanding impact they have had on the pupils. Assemblies are well planned based around the events of the Christian calendar and regular monitoring visits are carried out by the Foundation Governors. Pupils are all familiar with the Lord's Prayer and the school prayer. Although some pupils are still establishing their own beliefs about God they all like being in a church school where worship and religious education are important parts of the school day. Other opportunities for prayer exist during the day at lunch time and the end of the day. A reflective corner is also provided and used by pupils for individual thoughts. Although pupils have been involved in organising assemblies this is an area they would like to have greater opportunities in and are clearly capable of – the older pupils had enjoyed assemblies organised by the younger ones and vice versa. All staff who are in school in the mornings are involved in leading worship and discuss the content to ensure continuity. All staff attend at least one assembly each week but because of the small number of staff in the school some have to prepare for other activities of supervision. To give pupils the benefit of different approaches to worship the local vicar takes regular assemblies and the pupils look forward to these.

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

The issues identified at the last inspection have all been addressed, indeed encouraging pupils to lead assemblies has been addressed so well they want to do even more. The headteacher and governors are working very well together and their effectiveness at developing the school as a church school is outstanding. As well as being dedicated to creating a Christian ethos within the school they are all conscientious in monitoring the outcomes with a view to further improvement. Governors who have ensured that they are well trained and are kept well informed by the headteacher are very pro-active in the school. The Foundation Governors were fully involved in producing the pre-inspection documents and working with the headteacher to prepare for the inspection. They have created an atmosphere where not only the pupils but all the adults are very happy and feel very well supported within the school – one of the school statements is that not only does every child matter but every person matters. It is a credit to the school that, in a small rural school, by having a flexible approach to the weekly timetables they manage to meet the growing demands of the curriculum over the year. The partnership with the church is good and is only limited by the physical remoteness of the church from the school. The local vicar is an active governor as well as being a regular visitor to the school. The vision for maintaining the current strengths whilst improving provision wherever possible is shared by all staff and

governors. The partnership with parents is outstanding and their appreciation is reflected in the reputation of the school which is now always oversubscribed. Several parents were spoken to during the inspection and they were overwhelmingly supportive of the school as a church school. Although for many this is the local school a significant number have chosen the school because it is a church school and some travel long distances to bring their children to a school which supports their own beliefs.

SIAS report June 2007 Norbury C of E Primary School, Ashbourne, DE2 2EG