

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

North Wheatley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Sturton Road
South Wheatley
Retford
Nottinghamshire
DN22 9DH

Diocese: Southwell and Nottingham

Local authority: Nottinghamshire
Dates of inspection: February 27, 2007
Date of last inspection: February 2002
School's unique reference number: 122772
Headteacher: Mr Jonathan Hickman
Inspector's name and number: Mr Kerry Palmer (60)

School context

North Wheatley CofE Primary is a small school, housed in a modern building surrounded by pleasant grounds. Numbers on roll have grown in recent years and the school hall has become classrooms. However, the school has regular access to the adjacent village hall for PE, dinners and concerts. It serves a group of villages in a rural setting, with a few children attracted from further a field by the school's good reputation. The current head teacher has been in post for less than a year and teaches for 50% of the school day. There have been several staff changes over the past year. The children are white and British. The proportion with special needs is above the national average but none have exceptional needs.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of North Wheatley CofE Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

The attitudes and outlook of staff and pupils, working environment, policies and Mission Statement all make it clear that this is a church school. They all contribute positively to lively learning and above average attainment. The strong Christian ethos is evident in many aspects of school life with displays of cooperation, mutual respect and concern for all amongst stakeholders.

Established strengths

- School vision and leadership motivated by Christian values which are actively applied.
- The recognition that everyone is a unique product of God's creation with strengths and abilities to celebrate. This promotes a strong commitment to developing the potential of all pupils whatever their abilities.
- Positive and active links with the parish, other local churches and community.
- An acceptance that the school is a dynamic institution which needs to grow and develop.

Focus for development

- Review collective worship, with all stakeholders, in order to enhance the worship environment, increasing the range of pupil participation and maximise inspirational impact.
- Investigate with parish representatives the possibilities for church children's work at school and the further development of school-parish links.

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

Very good spiritual, moral and social development, motivated by Christian values, is evident in all aspects of school life. Children feel at ease and safe with supportive and caring staff. They are being given more responsibility; Pupil Voice is one example of positive developments. The review of the school's Mission Statement with pupils and display of the outcomes is another. The emphasis on positive reinforcement of good behaviour and the review of the behaviour policy with pupils again underlines the head teacher's vision to help children make their school the place they would like it to be. Attractive 'How to Behave Well' leaflets have been produced with the children and distributed to parents reinforcing the school's intent. Children play well together and enjoy the range of games equipment provided through Pupil Voice. The small number of children displaying challenging behaviour are very well managed. The school's Christian character is sustained by good religious education.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory.

Daily collective worship is organised around appropriate themes and contains the expected components. All teaching staff share in delivery. Most assemblies gather the three classes in a classroom. Efforts are made to create a reflective worship environment but more could be done. The worship observed was fun, but did they get the message? Currently there is little evaluation of impact. Pupils are attentive and receptive, but several expressed limited enthusiasm when talked to; few would consider it the most important part of the school day. Whilst retaining its Church of England identity, the school welcomes, and regularly receives, input to collective worship from other denominations; this is a strength and enriches the children's experience. The school attends church regularly for festivals and end of terms when parents and governors are welcomed. The children have positive memories of the annual Christingle. The church is also used effectively as a religious education resource. There is effective involvement with a range of charities and good causes which help children empathise as well as support. More could be done to raise children's awareness of the school's Anglican foundation.

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

The head teacher is sensitive to the necessary balance between school tradition and the need for growth and development. It is commendable that his appointment process included taking an assembly. The appointment of a new vicar should stimulate further developments between church and school. There are currently church members eager to link their children's work more closely with the school. Stakeholders are actively involved in discussion of proposed changes whilst the leadership retains a clear focus on the way ahead. Pupils are being progressively empowered and, over time, this trend should continue. Attractive and appropriate Christian displays and artefacts greet visitors in the school entrance. However, it would be good to see more display of prayers, artefacts and work produced in religious education and PSHE in classrooms and about the school. Foundation governors actively support the school's Christian foundation through admissions policy, staff appointments and the review and evaluation of policies and improvement plans. Additionally, some are engaged in children's work and promote parish-family links at school. They are eager to do more.