

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Pierrepoint Gamston Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Coledale,
West Bridgford,
Nottingham
NG2 6TH

Diocese: Southwell and Nottingham

Local authority: Nottinghamshire

Dates of inspection: June 11th 2007

Date of last inspection: March 2003

School's unique reference number: 132194

Headteacher: Mr John Heard

Inspector's name and number: Kate Gough 257

School context

Pierrepoint Gamston School, the newest Church Primary School in the Diocese, was built five years ago in the heart of the Nottingham suburb of Gamston. Additional classrooms and shared areas have been added to increase the school's capacity to 210. A purpose-built Kid's Club on the premises provides out-of-school care. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds; however the percentage of those from ethnic minority groups is increasing.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Pierrepoint Gamston School as a Church of England school are outstanding

This school has earned the reputation of being a Christian school with a tangible and distinctive ethos yet one which actively welcomes and sensitively embraces those of other faiths or none. All staff subscribe to the school's aims and Christian vision creating a working environment in which individuals flourish academically, emotionally and spiritually. Every aspect of school life is underpinned with prayer and exceptional support is provided by the local churches.

Established strengths

- Visionary leadership from the Head Teacher and enthusiastic support from staff and governors.
- Outstanding ecumenical and community links
- High quality Collective Worship central to the school day
- Meaningful opportunities for prayer throughout the day

Focus for development

- Develop a manageable marking policy for RE to indicate the focus of the task, the learner's understanding and to inform assessment
- Ensure that progression is built into RE medium-term planning documentation
- In the School Brochure celebrate the unique features of the school's Christ-centred ethos which make Collective Worship and RE distinctive, using "user-friendly" language

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

The school's reputation as an outstanding Church school attracts families from outside the catchment area. Parents were informed of the inspection and given opportunity to express their views; overwhelmingly they spoke of the distinctive Christian ethos in this school which impacts on relationships and the tangible loving atmosphere in which they and their children feel valued. They appreciate that all the staff are approachable and exceptionally caring and that the office staff are always welcoming and helpful. Some spoke of the way their children have grown in their faith during their time at school and how they value the Bibles they are given on entry, often sharing stories with families and friends. There is a very real emphasis on developing respect and understanding for cultural and religious differences; individuals

are given confidence and encouragement to talk about their own beliefs and traditions. The link with a school in Goa is ongoing and exciting – raising awareness of the World Church and celebrating similarities and differences. One of the school's aims is "To encourage all members of the school community to be aware of their own spirituality." A new venture is a Staff Retreat day to be led by the Chair of Governors, the local Methodist minister. Behaviour in school is excellent and the children are well-mannered and respectful; any issues of concern are dealt with swiftly and appropriately. Prayer is a vital component of the school day; each classroom has a Prayer Corner and initiatives such as the lunch-time Prayer Group are effective in helping children to talk to God in their own words. An Easter Prayer Labyrinth was a successful event, involving parents in leading workshops and helping the school community to think and pray through the events of the season.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The SEF speaks of "nurturing the children in a Christian environment where they experience meaningful Collective Worship." All children and parents interviewed unanimously valued the school's times of worship; Governors who have monitored it also report positively about the children's involvement and response. The special atmosphere has been commented on by visiting clergy and church representatives who lead worship on a regular basis. Foundation governors have met to discuss the content and style of worship. The Head teacher acts as co-ordinator, plans thoughtfully, leads regularly and monitors all worship led by other members of staff or visitors. Year 6 children formally evaluate each act of worship. A candle and cross are used to set the scene, creating a sense of "sacred space" and a liturgical response, led by a child, indicates the beginning of worship. Children from the youngest to the oldest expressed their enjoyment of singing, which was lively and enthusiastic. They were able to recount stories and their meanings from previous times of worship and value the element of prayer. Midweek worship is held in the Parish Church at special times of the year, one highlight being the Celebration Service to mark the 5th Birthday of the school. There are opportunities for involvement at other local churches on Sundays, valuing the school as part of the Church family.

Pierrepont Gamston Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Coledale, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 6TH June 2007

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The policy states that RE has a special place in the life and work of this school and this was found to be the case. There was a real enthusiasm to demonstrate existing good practice during the Inspection and all children interviewed expressed a real interest in the work they were engaged in. Parents confirmed this and said that often children would discuss lessons at home, sometimes reading stories in their Bibles. Issues identified in the last Inspection have been addressed, particularly the need to develop a "multi-cultural dimension" – this is now a strength of the school. The Head teacher, as subject co-ordinator, monitors RE throughout school. Planning is thorough although medium-term plans should offer more detailed guidance to avoid repetition and ensure progression. There is an already identified need to supplement the County Agreed Syllabus with more specifically Christian content as appropriate in an Aided school. Good use is made of IT, visitors and artefacts and Year 5 children demonstrated good research skills. Foundation Stage children were fully engaged in activities linked with the story of Noah, many could retell the story and explain the meaning of "trust". Recording throughout school, when used, was age-appropriate, differentiated and imaginative but the absence of informative marking made it difficult to discern the purpose and evaluate the understanding and effectiveness of previously completed work.

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

The Head teacher has a clear Christian vision for the school and a commitment to the wider school family, shared by the staff and governors. Foundation governors meet together as appropriate to discuss admission criteria, Collective Worship and the school's ethos and worked alongside the Head teacher to complete the Toolkit. Prayer underpins all decision making. They take their responsibilities seriously in monitoring Collective Worship and RE. The Governing body actively encouraged and supported the Head teacher's sabbatical leave

to explore Church School distinctiveness. The partnership with local churches is outstanding and the clergy are regular visitors, sharing their expertise and offering pastoral support to the school family. Communication between home and school is excellent; a weekly newsletter and regularly updated website keep parents informed of school events and initiatives and they feel confident to approach staff at any time with questions or concerns. Parent's views are regularly sought and a recent questionnaire included questions about the school's Christian ethos and the impact of worship. The School Council is described as "A valuable forum through which children can begin to understand the democratic process." The Head teacher meets with other church-school heads to discuss relevant issues and is appreciative of Diocesan training opportunities and support.

Pierrepont Gamston Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Coledale, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 6TH June 2007