

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Rackenford Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Rackenford
Tiverton
Devon
EX16 8DU

Diocese: Exeter

Local authority: Devon
Dates of inspection: 19th June 2008
Date of last inspection: 5th & 6th May 2004
School's unique reference number: 113495
Headteacher: Mrs Caroline Buckley
Inspector's name and number: Colleen Arnold - 450

School context

Rackenford Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is a small rural village school serving the village of Rackenford, farms and nearby hamlets. There are 63 pupils on roll. Most pupils live in the village. All speak English as their first language with almost all being of white British origin.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Rackenford Voluntary Aided Primary as a Church of England school are Good

The ethos of Rackenford school is firmly rooted in Christian belief and practice. It is an environment where children feel cared for, feel safe, are happy and are valued as individuals. Children want to be at the school and are eager to learn.

Established strengths

- Strong Christian ethos
- Relationships with learners, parents and the wider community
- Meeting the needs of learners

Focus for development

- Introduce robust strategies to record and evaluate the impact of worship on learners and inform planning for worship
- Develop Assessment of Religious Education (RE) attainment target 2 'Learning from Religion'
- Seek the views of stakeholders on the Christian character of the school, collective worship and religious education

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

The Christian character of the school is explicit and has a positive impact on learners. The majority of learners' say they feel valued and special because adults always listen to them and treat them fairly. One child said that this was true 'even when he had been naughty.' They say they are treated as individuals and that all the adults' care about them. Relationships between staff and learners' demonstrate respect for each other and are rooted in the Christian principles of forgiveness and reconciliation. This in turn has a positive impact

on behaviour and attitudes to learning. Learners' needs are at the centre of the life of the school and all staff focus their energies on meeting them. As a result learners' make good progress and achieve well. Staff have successful relationships with parents/carers and respond quickly to issues that affect the children. Children were quick to say that they are happy and feel safe at school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship has a central role in the life of the school. It is carefully planned to reflect the church's year. The learners' understanding of Anglican tradition is good because careful planning ensures that the pattern of worship follows the Church's year and reflects Anglican tradition. The involvement of the incumbent in leading worship further supports the learners' understanding of Anglican tradition and practice. Learners' show respect because great care is taken to ensure that acts of worship take place in a calm and peaceful environment. An atmosphere that promotes spiritual development is evident and is enhanced by the personal faith commitment of many of the worship leaders. Staff and learners' say that worship helps them to be still. Staff stated that "It provides them with time to reflect" and learners commented that it "helps us to understand Bible stories better." Worship is led by staff and visitors and provides opportunities for prayer, silence, and reflection with good use of music/singing. Consequently learners' experience a good variety of styles of worship. The quality of Christian worship is good. Major Christian festivals are celebrated in school or in church. Learners say they look forward to daily acts of worship because they play an active part by asking or answering questions or through drama and singing. They particularly enjoy it when they lead worship or when they have services in church because it's a special place, it makes worship special. The content of collective worship is evaluated regularly and revised where appropriate. Evaluation of the impact of worship is informal and recording limited, although this is under review.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The quality of learning is good because teachers plan interesting, stimulating and appropriately challenging lessons. Attitudes to learning are good, with learners participating enthusiastically, asking and responding to questions appropriately. Learners' speak of enjoying religious education and of how it helps them to understand what other people believe. In a lesson on Hinduism learners' were discussing Krishna as a divine being and what that means to believers. They were able to relate this to their own experience and beliefs about what God means to them. Progress in religious education is good when compared to other core subjects. Learners' spiritual and moral development is facilitated through a well planned curriculum that challenges their thinking. Following recent in-service training on religious education, assessment is being reviewed and takes account of the new Agreed Syllabus. Assessment of 'learning from religion' Attainment Target 2, is being amended. Assessment of attainment target 1 is firmly embedded

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

The Headteacher has a clear Christian vision for the school which is shared effectively. Consequently, the Governors, staff and parents understand and speak confidently about the school's Christian vision. The vision is reflected in the school's public documentation which makes the Christian foundation clear to the wider community. The governing body encourage, support and challenge the Head teacher effectively in promoting the school as a church school. Good management strategies ensure that RE and Collective Worship are regularly monitored and that appropriate budgets are available to support the development of these areas. Staff receive good levels of support and challenge from the school's leaders. This results in effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. Parents actively support the school in its role as a Christian worshipping community by regularly attending worship in school and at the church. They express how valuable this is to them and their children. A large majority of parents, learners and other stakeholders speak positively of the

way in which the school seeks and values their views. Views are sought in a variety of ways that include questionnaires and personal contact and these contribute to the schools self evaluation process. Relationships between the school and parish are supportive and successful with regular joint worship.

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