

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Richard Thornton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Burton in Lonsdale
Near Ingleton,
North Yorkshire.
LA6 3JZ

Diocese: Bradford

Local authority: North Yorkshire
Dates of inspection: 21st September 2007
Date of last inspection: February 2002
School's unique reference number: 121623
Headteacher: Mr Chris Norris
Inspector's name and number: Mr R D Masterton No. 483

School context

Richard Thornton's CE VA Primary School serves the rural village of Burton in Lonsdale and the surrounding area of the North Craven district of North Yorkshire. There are 34 children on roll organised into two classes (Reception, Years 1 and 2; and Years 3, 4 and 5) and they leave at the end of Year 5 to attend a middle school. Children come from predominately long-standing rural families and from newer arrivals. There are currently two children on the special needs register.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Richard Thornton's as a Church of England school are good

Richard Thornton's Primary School embodies a Christian commitment to the educational and spiritual needs of all children in the district it serves. Children become confident, caring individuals who achieve well. If high standards in religious education and other subjects can be secured and by giving greater scope and challenge for children's thought and creativity to be allied to their collective worship, the school has the potential to become outstanding as a church school.

Established strengths

- The clear Christian mission and aims expressed by governors that are widely understood both by parents and children and which underpin life and work in school.
- The outstanding personal development of the children who are genuinely committed to each other's happiness and welfare.
- The quality of the professionalism and commitment by the head teacher and governors to realising the church-school mission and to overcoming the limitations imposed by the small size of the school.

Focus for development

- Introduce an assessment-based dimension to religious education in order that managers and governors may ensure that standards and achievement are at least as good or better than those in other areas of the curriculum.
- Secure consistent high standards of teaching and learning in religious education for all year groups.
- Extend creative participation by children in the collective worship of the school.

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

Staff and foundation governors of Richard Thornton's Primary School are highly committed to ensuring educational development and care of children in ways that are truly inspired by the Christian foundation of the school. The school is fully inclusive for children of all faiths and denominations. Learning is organised to meet the needs of every child including any local children whose particular educational needs mean they may also require specialised provision in other

schools. The personal development of children, especially their spiritual, moral and social growth is outstanding. By the end of their education at Richard Thornton's they have grown into confident, caring, free thinking and achieving individuals whose attitudes and behaviour are all the more commendable as they are one year younger than in most other schools when they leave. The school community works through mutual care and respect not only between adults and children but between the children themselves. Older children naturally and spontaneously look after and support the needs of younger ones both at work and at play. In this school the Christian ethos is tangible through display, worship, spoken prayers and relationships. Children's achievement is good.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is well planned and takes place each day. It follows the Anglican calendar but with varying themes for the major festivals such as harvest to sustain interest, relevance and reflection. School collective worship is also held in the parish church. There are strong links with parish services with artefacts and displays made by children for their own worship used in church. The parish priest knows all children well and leads acts of collective worship in school normally every week. Children contribute to worship, for example, giving readings when asked and they recollect easily many of the important occasions such as Easter and Christmas; increased creative opportunities for pupil participation would enhance its impact. Their attitude towards collective worship is entirely positive. In their minds there are strong connections with what they learn through their religious education in school. Through worship children develop a clear sense of right and wrong and are inspired to work hard to help others who are less fortunate. Acts of collective worship have helped everyone connected with the school to cope with periods of great sadness. Parents do not come to school collective worship on a weekly basis but join worship held for important occasions such as the end of each half term and attendance is high. No children are withdrawn from worship by parents of other faiths.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

Through their religious education children acquire a good knowledge of the main aspects of Christianity but also learn of other faiths. The school invites religious leaders from the Jewish and Muslim communities into school and has also developed a link with a multi-racial urban school and a primary school in Uganda. Children learn enthusiastically and also critically. For example older children can not only recall the details of the Easter story but will also discriminate between what is plausible historically and that which is linked to faith or belief. That Jesus was raised, or that miracles occurred, are things not dismissed as fiction but are seen by children as matters for each person to resolve as part of their growth in understanding. Reflection and prayer are included in their lessons. Children in all years enjoy religious education but the school does not yet have an assessment, recording and reporting system to ensure that standards can be accurately monitored for each pupil. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, and in some cases good, but in order for it to be good in all year groups the children's learning activities require better structure. Governors place high value on religious education provision.

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

The head teacher provides good leadership in developing and sustaining a faith-inspired school notwithstanding his extensive teaching commitment with older children. Governors are highly committed to their clearly-expressed mission. Their work is exceptionally well structured and is informed by extensive monitoring of all aspects of school work. Individual governors have designated subject responsibilities, spend much time in school and give extensive support and challenge to its work. Foundation governors closely monitor worship and religious education. A regular cycle of review is in place, and scheduled to begin work on collective worship and religious education, and to be informed by the school inspections. Bi-annual whole-school meetings are held, each with a structured format, that allow views to be collected from everyone connected with the school community. Children too are consulted and their views are reported to the governing body. Links with the worshiping communities in the village are very good. The special quality of the school is recognised by parents who identify with its mission, whatever their denomination or faith, and who support the school in many different ways.