

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Roberttown Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Road,
Roberttown,
Liversedge,
W. Yorks,
WF 15 8BE

Diocese: Wakefield

Local Authority : Kirklees

Dates of inspection : Sept 11th 2006

Date of last inspection: May 21st-23th 2001

School's Unique reference number: 107721

Headteacher: Mrs. J.S. Laycock-Smith

Inspector's name and number: J.D Jagger Ins. No. 214

School context

The school is a 1970s construction with recent additions with extensive well maintained and imaginatively developed grounds for children's play. The school serves a village community of 228 pupils aged 4 –11. The school includes around 4% of pupils from ethnic minorities and only 2.2% of the pupils are in receipt of free school meals. Almost all pupils have experienced some pre-school provision prior to entering the reception class.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Roberttown Junior and Infant School, as a Church of England school are good.

The school is a good church school and recognises that its performance could be further improved through enhanced self-evaluation procedures.

Established strengths

The school has an excellent working relationship with the church and the incumbent and the foundation governors understand and are successful in their role of promoting the school as a church affiliated school organisation.

Pupils express confidence in the care afforded by the school and believe that their opinions are important to those leading the school.

Worship is seen as an important and interesting part of the school day and pupils understand the purpose of prayer and of reflection. The provision of "Candle Time" for the youngest pupils accords well with the foundation key stage curriculum.

The regular contact between headteacher, the Chair of Governors and the incumbent to evaluate the effectiveness of the school as a church school are effective.

Focus for development

Governors and staff should seek to further strengthen the existing self-evaluation procedures by;

- Reviewing the aims of the school to ensure that they meet the needs of all pupils;
- Consolidating procedures for regular review to ensure that the school is effective both in further developing its understanding of the impact of its programmes on pupils' knowledge, attitudes and values and in supporting governors in their evaluation of the school's success in achieving the agreed aims and mission statement.

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

The school has an excellent working relationship with the church and with the local incumbent. Foundation governors ensure good communication with both the church membership and the PCC and work hard to ensure the Christian ethos is reflected in the life of the school. The church membership and the broader community lend their support to the activities of the school. There is an evident willingness and ability within the school both to evaluate its effectiveness as a community school and the additional dimensions of being a church controlled school. The school has developed aims and a mission statement appropriate to a caring school. The school has responded well to the challenges of Every Child Matters and to the extended schooling initiative with good provision both before and after school and a range of activities designed to enrich pupils' learning experience. Pupils express confidence in the care afforded by the school and there is evidence to confirm their belief that the School Council's views are able to influence policy. Pupils are familiar with the school's behaviour policy and identify the reward aspects of this before discussing sanctions. Despite the very early date of inspection, pupils and staff have already identified personal targets for many pupils and have appropriate documentation relating to pupils with special educational needs and those defined as gifted and talented. Observations confirmed work being differentiated to match pupil ability in maths and English. Pupils feel happy and secure and the working atmosphere is a cheerful one.

The school has a well-understood "Befrienders" programme and pupils appreciate and respect the lunchtime and playtime behavioural codes. The public areas of the school are well used to promote the school's Christian affiliation and to emphasise the relationship to the parish church. The design of the school does not lend itself to the identification of an area reserved for quiet and reflection but the school recognises this as desirable. Training has been undertaken on the importance of reflection both within worship and in the broader curriculum.

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

The school complies with the legal requirements relating to worship within its prospectus and has developed a policy statement, reviewed in 2005 that provides staff and parents with guidance as to the purpose, context and content of collective worship. The programme provided is well balanced to provide a broadly Christian focus whilst recognising the need to provide pupils with information and understanding about major aspects of other faiths and cultures. Worship is regarded by pupils as an important and interesting point in the school day. The planning procedures also provide a record of worship that includes a useful and regular evaluation by the person delivering that act of worship. The school recognises the need to further develop its evaluative procedures to better evaluate the long-term impact of these experiences on pupils of all ages. The school makes very good use of visitors including ordained foundation governors, some from other Christian traditions and representatives of other faiths. These events add variety and insight to the programme. Discussions with pupils indicate that these are some of the best-remembered events. Good use is also made of the parish church to host worship on major festival occasions and these are well attended by parents. The incumbent provides strong support in several roles including guidance in the planning of the programme as well as in delivery.

Care has been taken to generate an appropriate atmosphere for worship within the hall through the use of display, the providing of appropriate music and by encouraging pupil reflection as to the purpose of the event as well as consideration of the particular theme. A lighted candle provided an additional focal point in the act observed and all staff and the visiting Chair of Governors participated in worship. The planned format gives the opportunity, at least once a week, for pupils to worship as a key stage. This provides the opportunity to respond to pupils' differing levels of understanding on complex themes such as that of Amnesty International. Pupils understand the purpose of prayer and considerable effort has been made to

develop their understanding of the Lord's Prayer using material closer to the pupils own experience. Opportunities for reflection and discussion were a strength of the act of worship observed. Pupils participated well in the session and the existing evaluations indicate this to be a regular feature of worship. The school has indicated its intention to review aspects of its current provision. Further consideration of the evaluation procedures to establish the long-term impact of provision on the knowledge, understanding and attitudes of pupils would be advantageous.

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

The aims, mission statement and policies such as the Sex Education and Relationship policy reflect the values of a Church affiliated school and parents' legal rights are clearly identified. The head and senior managers provide appropriate monitoring information to governors through existing reporting procedures. Procedures are in place and used, to regularly canvass parental opinion and those of pupils. The regular contact between headteacher, the Chair of Governors and the incumbent to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's performance as a church school are effective. There is a debate within the governing body as to the emphasis placed on various aspects of the agreed aims. If the existing aims are used as criteria against which to evaluate the current effectiveness of the school and to determine whether the aims encompass all the important aspects of pupils' needs this could be a useful exercise. There is agreement as to the importance of ensuring that those aspects relating to being a church school are important to the community. The foundation governors understand the purpose of their role in maintaining and promoting the Christian identity of the school and its relationship with the church. They are successful in achieving this. Through the use of visitors and IT resources the school seeks successfully to ensure pupils are informed about other faiths and customs but direct contact for pupils has proved difficult.