

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Rossington St. Michael's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Sheepbridge Lane
Old Rossington
Doncaster
DN11 0EZ

Diocese of Sheffield

Local authority: Doncaster
Dates of inspection: 5th & 6th June 2007
Date of last inspection: January 2002
School's Unique reference number: 106765
Name of Headteacher: Mr. Keith Schooling
Inspector's name and number: Mrs. Joan Stratford NS241

School Context

This 2-form entry school with 369 pupils aged between 4 and 11 years serves the nearby village, which includes a large private development. A substantial increase in numbers resulted in a large extension completed in 2004. A smaller than average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals, although a minority comes from an area of social disadvantage. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is higher than average. Most pupils are White British and very few are in the early stages of learning English.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Rossington St. Michael's Primary School as a Church of England school are satisfactory.

Rossington St. Michael's School is a satisfactory Church School with many strengths. Pupils are happy and value their school and the care shown to them.

Established strengths

- The good working relationship with parents, governors, the local Church and the community.
- The good behaviour of pupils and the way in which they care for each other.
- The effort made by the staff in making the school an attractive learning environment.

Focus for development

- To devise a scheme of work for Religious Education which takes account of the Doncaster Agreed Syllabus and the QCA non-statutory framework for Religious Education and to also develop appropriate assessment of the subject.
- To use the National Society Toolkit as a developmental tool for the Head, Staff and Governors over the next academic year,
- To produce a new prospectus to reflect the status and ethos of a Church Aided School and include all the statutory information.

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

Relationships are good between pupils and staff and between pupils. All feel valued and there is a high quality of care in the school. Pupils' achievements are praised and they respond by being committed to their work. The atmosphere around the school is relaxed and orderly, pupils are focussed and well behaved, they respond appropriately to all adults. All of this is clearly in line with Christian principles although the Church Aided status is not sufficiently emphasised around the school or made explicit in the school's documentation. The School Aims reflect the Christian character of the school and mention Christian teaching. They also refer to the relationship with the Parish Church, which is good. Currently there is an Interregnum; the previous Vicar was a regular visitor to the school. The Children's Worker employed by St. Michael's Church is very active within the school and older pupils attend a weekly Act of Collective Worship led by her in the Church. Pupils speak very enthusiastically about this Worship. The Church is used by the school on a regular basis, indeed next week a 'wedding' is to be conducted there involving the Y2 classes. Moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Moral Education is covered in Collective Worship and Religious Education and pupils are able to talk meaningfully about moral issues. The teaching of two other faiths in Religious Education has introduced the pupils to some teaching about those cultures but there is no opportunity for first hand experience. A range of after and before school activities is on offer and is well supported. Spiritual development is satisfactory, but does not give pupils the opportunity to explore their own beliefs and those of other people and the way in which they impact on peoples' lives. Pupils feel that they are listened to and have adults who they can turn to if experiencing any kind of difficulty, but there is nowhere, either inside or out, where pupils can go to be quiet and pray or reflect. One of the Y2 classes has a corner set up as 'St. Michael's Church' which children in that class can use. A school Council has been established. The relationship with parents is good, they can come into school if they have any concerns regarding their children, are listened to and problems are invariably resolved satisfactorily. An active Parents' Association organises fund-raising and social events. Support is given to several charities. The School is involved in Healthy eating initiatives, which has raised their awareness of the need for a healthy diet and regular exercise. There is involvement in a variety of other areas – Arts Week, Book Week, Music Competitions and the award of the Basic Skills Quality Mark. Most pupils move on to All Saints' High School with which there is a good relationship.

The impact of Collective Worship on the school community is good.

Collective Worship is good and pupils say that they enjoy it. It is held in the Church every Tuesday for pupils in Key Stage 2 and for the Christian Festivals, however the very small size of the Church limits its use, as there is insufficient space to accommodate all of the pupils. The Parish Children's Worker who leads the Church based worship is a positive role model for the pupils who regard her as their friend; the parents also appreciate her involvement. Clergy from other, non-Anglican churches also come into school to lead worship. Collective Worship occupies an important place in the life of the school. The Policy for it is good and includes information on the Parental right of Withdrawal, however the lack of a prospectus means that parents are not told about the right of withdrawal or other important information about Collective Worship or about the significance of being a Church Aided School. At school based worship older pupils help prepare the hall. A table with a Bible and cross is used as a focus and a candle lit. The pupils from Key Stage Two wait quietly and reflectively before the commencement of the worship but this is not the case with the younger pupils who are somewhat noisy. Pupils sing enthusiastically, although not always tunefully. They listen attentively and respond well to the worship. There is a high level of pupil participation. No use is made of liturgy and pupils' knowledge of Anglican practice is very limited. The worship is quite clearly having a positive affect on pupils' moral development and they have a clear understanding of 'right and wrong' behaviour, but there is less effect their spiritual development. Surprisingly when separate Key Stage Worship is held the two acts are identical rather than planned appropriately to the age group of pupils. All staff attend worship, which reinforces its importance. A record is kept of the Collective Worship although it is not very detailed and lacks evaluative comment.

The effectiveness of Religious Education in the school is satisfactory.

Religious Education lessons are satisfactory with many good features. Lessons are well prepared but there appears to be a lack of differentiation within them. Lessons involve drama, discussion, writing and drawing. Good links between Religious Education and PHSE impact positively on pupils' moral development. When questioned pupils do not all have a good knowledge of the Christian Festivals and particularly the Anglican faith. The school reflects a mono-cultural population and although pupils are taught about two other faiths, Judaism and Hinduism, no visits are made to their places of worship. A small supply of artefacts is available and books on Christianity and other faiths; these are supplemented by borrowing from a local centre. Pupils learn about several denominations of the Christian faith. Not all classrooms have displays of work, which are related to Religious Education. Currently there is a brief long term planning sheet for Religious Education but no scheme of work to support it. Neither is any assessment of the subject in place but the school has identified this as an area for development. A portfolio of pupils' work has recently been started. The Religious Education Co-ordinator is very enthusiastic about her role and gives good support to other members of staff in spite of a lack of Inset opportunities offered to her.

The leadership and management of the school as a Church School are satisfactory with many good features.

The Headteacher, staff and Governors are focussed on raising standards in the School but there is a lack of emphasis on being a Church of England Aided School. Staff feel valued and supported, this is a strong feature of the school and there is a good team spirit. Parents are satisfied that the school provides a very caring environment, inspired by Christian principles, which enables pupils of all abilities and backgrounds to develop to their full potential but are unaware of the implications of being a Church Aided School. Currently there is no prospectus, which can be given to parents when their children are due to start attending the School. There is a Parents' Handbook but this does not contain vital information, which should be made available to them. The Governing body, which is well led, takes an active interest in and is supportive of the school, their meetings begin and end with prayers. Governors are involved in evaluating the curriculum but not as much as they ought over aspects relating to its distinctive Christian character. Although Staff and Governors are involved in the completion of the Self- Evaluation Form (SEF), the Church School equivalent - the National Society Toolkit - has not been seen by them and has been completed by the Headteacher. This is an important document for the development of the School as a Church School and its importance should be acknowledged. The School accepts that it has not prioritised the further development of its Christian character in its current School Development Plan. The leadership and management of the School have the necessary skills to address this situation. The relationship with the leaders and lay-members of the Parish Church is good.