

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Roxton Church of England Voluntary Aided Lower School

School Lane

Roxton

Bedfordshire

MK44 3DR

Diocese of St Albans

LA: Bedfordshire

SIAS Inspection: 20th May 2008

Previous S23 Inspection: October 2003

URN: 109625

Headteacher: Andrew Callow

SIAS Inspector Name: Alan Thornsby 137

School Context

Roxton Lower School has pupils from five local villages, most of whom are White British. Most children enter school with skill levels similar to those expected for their age. Although there are variations due to the size of each cohort, there are average numbers of pupils with learning difficulties, a small number of whom have statements of special needs. The school has gained several awards such as Activemark, Healthy Schools and International schools Awards

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Roxton Lower School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

Roxton Lower School has a commitment to providing the best learning situation for all its pupils. Firmly rooted in Christian values, a cycle of self--assessment and review by the school's leaders has created an ethos of care and respect. This results in everyone realising they are unique individuals yet part of a community.

Established strengths

- The commitment of the school's leaders to continuous development
- The inclusive, caring ethos that promotes respectful relationships
- The quality of pupils' personal development.

Focus for development

- Extend the opportunities to develop pupils' thinking skills and spiritual development through the use of reflective questions and interactive displays, especially in RE.

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

Children are really valued as individuals in this school. They are greeted by name as they arrive by the head and office manager and made to feel special at the start of each morning. This is one example of the caring family ethos created by the small size of the school. Pupils say 'no-one is ever alone at playtime here, we all play together.' Excellent relationships throughout are a result of Christian values of respect, trust and compassion. Adults constantly model these for the children to copy. There is a great sense of community because of the role model of the head and the respect he has gained. Moral and social development is excellent because pupils are encouraged to be confident by being given responsibility and being involved in decision making. Pupils share successes and explore difficult situations in a safe environment in weekly 'Buddy groups' with an adult they have

chosen. Pupils have a mature sense of the need for confidentiality in these situations, particularly in view of their young age. They say confidentiality is important as 'stops people from being embarrassed.' They are also mature in the way they recognise their privileged position in relation to others less fortunate and are active in fundraising to help them. Adults have high expectations of pupils who explain 'our work is always appropriate and we like it when we have a challenge'. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is excellent because of the effective use of the school environment and international links with schools in Italy and America.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is central to the life of the school. It is well planned by the coordinator using the diocesan guidelines. The quality and effectiveness of worship is measured by the coordinator or members of the governing body, who lead or are present as worshippers. Pupils experience of worship is broad because of a range of leaders and styles of presentation. The weekly service in church, led by the vicar allows pupils to be familiar and confident in worship. This provides them with an openness to talk about faith. This is extended by the use of church for both festival services and school performances. Pupils describe worship as 'a time to be quiet and talk to God'. Pupils show their understanding of the message of worship as, for example, they remind each other about turning off the tap after exploring the difficulties of some people who have no local water supply. The invitation to join the church community in fund-raising to provide water extends the feeling of belonging to a wider worshipping community. Prayer has a high profile in the school day and a prayer book in the entrance allows pupils to share prayers. Although pupils understand prayer as 'a time to be quiet because it is a symbol of our respect for God', prayer is often confined to saying thank you or to remember those less fortunate. Pupils have a good understanding of the church year and talk confidently about symbols and rituals.

The effectiveness of Religious Education is good

The recently appointed coordinator is well organised and is effectively creating a secure foundation for further developments. She has a good knowledge of what is happening in school through examining teachers' planning and pupils' work and keeping annotated action plans. She is also aware of the benefits of shared lesson observations that have been identified in the next cycle of school review. The school is beginning to develop a collection of work samples that, along with end of unit assessments, indicate that achievement is in line or sometimes better than other subjects. Pupils respond well to the enthusiastic teaching that has creative, differentiated tasks, often made even more exciting to children by being set a 'a challenge'. For example, pupils gain a good understanding of the symbolism of water in Islam and Christianity after comparing a role-play baptism and Wadu ritual. Younger children extend their knowledge by using 'detective clues' to link special books with their stands and explain their reasons. Pupils obviously enjoy RE and explain 'it teaches you how to be kind and respect other people.'

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

The school is driven by the clear vision and commitment of the headteacher to continuous development of the school, its buildings, curriculum and staff. This means there is a cycle of self-assessment and review that involves all members of the school community. They all have the opportunity to share their views and have feedback when decisions are made. The governing body has a close relationship with the school giving both challenge and support. Many members often 'drop in' as well as taking part in half termly visits to give them first hand experience of the school. Involvement in self-assessment has given governors the opportunity to identify strengths and create action plans for development areas. The sense of unity in the leadership and management of the school is also seen in the commitment of the staff team to ensure that they provide the best opportunities for all. Parents are justly proud of the school and its impact on the academic and personal development of their children. The highly effective PTFA is another indicator of the parents and community. The vicar and other members of the church community are regular visitors in school working with

children and the church is frequently used by the school for performances as well as for services.

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