

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Scissett Church of England Voluntary Aided First school

Wakefield Road
Scissett
Huddersfield
HD8 9HR

Diocese: Wakefield

Local authority: Kirklees
Dates of inspection: 24th. February 2009
Date of last inspection: 22nd. May 2006
School's unique reference number: 107743
Headteacher: Elaine Watson
Inspector's name and number: Alan Thornsby 137

School context

Scissett First School is a smaller than average school with 137 pupils. Almost all these are White British who are from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. The proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are below average. Most pupils are taught in mixed age classes. The school has received the Investors in People, Healthy schools and Sports Activemark awards.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Scissett First as a Church of England school are outstanding

Scissett First school provides pupils a learning environment in which Christian values underpin daily lives and routines. This gives them experience of belonging to a community where they are nurtured in self-confidence, care and respect for other people and are well prepared to become members of society.

Established strengths

- The vision and commitment of the headteacher
- The culture of self assessment that informs strategic planning by staff and governors
- The impact of the school's Christian ethos on pupils' personal and academic development

Focus for development

The climate of self-assessment and subsequent action planning means that no specific areas have been identified for development

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

In this school Christian values and principles truly 'run through every area of school life as the writing runs through a stick of rock.' Practice, policy and daily routines are firmly founded in and proclaim a Christian ethos. Relationships between the whole school community are excellent and pupils enjoy the way 'teachers make learning fun.' Pupils are proud of their school and the care and security it gives them. Their behaviour is excellent because they understand the reasons for good behaviour, rules and sanctions. They also know the value of saying sorry, forgiveness and fresh start. They have a well-expressed voice in the pupil council and welcome new pupils by being a buddy for the week. The staff have high expectations for everyone in school and pupils know they are challenged but well supported to achieve academically and personally by a range of strategies. Pupils use 'thinking hats' to explore thinking from different perspectives when solving problems. Pupils are articulate and the ethos of the school gives them the confidence to talk about the importance of faith. It also allows them to share 'big questions' such as 'if God made us, who made God?' at home. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is excellent because of the effective

cross-curricular links, and the high profiles of religious education and collective worship. These result in the pupils not simply caring for each other but actively supporting others less fortunate through charity fund raising. Pupils experience their own culture and customs through performances at 'The Shepley Folk Festival'. The school is developing links with a multi cultural school to give pupils first hand experience of other faiths and cultures.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship makes an outstanding impact on pupils because well-planned themes build on the experience of pupils to extend their spiritual development and Biblical understanding. Themes are well resourced, including a number of powerpoint presentations, some of which have been created by pupils. Staff and pupils monitor every act of worship and this evaluation is used to inform future planning. Times for reflection in worship and discussion in classrooms at age appropriate levels reinforce themes. Pupils create a reverent atmosphere for worship. They use reflection before worship, guided by projected images and texts and suitable music. Pupils enjoy contributing to worship. 'Singing Praise' is a strength of the school, enjoyed by all children. Through this pupils develop a wide, demanding vocabulary and spiritual development because of the range of songs used. All staff lead and contribute to worship. For example, as an introduction to Lent, the school cook made a pancake before the meaning of Lent and its Biblical origins were explored. Pupils explain that worship 'helps them to know about right and wrong' and 'is a time to think about God and say thank you.' Prayer has a high profile in school and pupils use opportunities to reflect or pray throughout the day because of prayer corners in the hall and every classroom. The impact of this is reflected in the comments such as 'we can tell God what we are thinking about and ask him for help.' Pupils gain a wide experience of worship in different Christian denominations because clergy and other adults from other local churches lead worship in school. The termly family service led by the school in the parish church allows pupils to be part of a wider worshipping community. The church is also used by the school for festival services.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Religious education is central to the spiritual and moral development of all the school. A recent in depth review by the coordinator has highlighted the impact and effectiveness of RE. This and end of unit assessment indicates learners reach standards comparable to those in other core subjects. The school has also recognised the need to introduce assessment criteria based on levels of attainment and is working to introduce this. Teaching is good or better because teachers constantly challenge pupils' thinking, and encourage them to find appropriate responses. They also make very effective use of cross-curricular links to engage with pupils' previous experiences. For example, Y1 shared their own difficult journeys and made a model friend to support Jesus on his way to Jerusalem. They then made comments such as 'I will protect you Jesus' and 'I will follow you and love you' to encourage Jesus on his difficult journey. Older pupils explored the limitations of the word 'love' before considering three different Greek meanings and relating their experiences to these. They were further challenged to explore and reflect on a passage from Corinthians. Pupils have a wealth of Biblical knowledge and readily explain the significance of a number of parables. These help them to make moral decisions and understand about the beliefs of other people. Termly visits by governors linked to each class, and end of term reports of work in RE ensure that governors are well informed of work and progress in RE.

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

The head has a clear vision for the school as a church school, based on trust, respect and care for all. It is the foundation of every aspect of school life. It is shared by the adults in school, all of whom provide a role model in school life for pupils to copy. The governing body are active in the life of the school. Several are involved in leading worship and all are kept informed of RE progress in each class because of being linked to a class. These links, termly reports and governors' day visits enable them to have first hand experience of progress in worship, RE and church school distinctiveness. These make significant contributions to the culture of ongoing self-assessment that informs strategic development planning. Thus self-assessment is accurate and the issues identified in the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. An opening prayer at Governors meetings means Christian values

inform decision-making. Parents are highly appreciative of the work of the school and impact on the academic and personal development of their children. A typical comment from parents is 'I am delighted that values from home are continued at school.' They are proud of the school and enjoy the open door policy that immediately prevents issues becoming problems. They are also very positive about the way teaching assistants as well as teachers successfully engage in and solve problems. They also demonstrate their commitment through PTFA events. The school has beneficial links with its pyramid school and other local groups. The church makes a distinctive contribution through a transition project led by the vicar. This is specifically designed to support Year five pupils before they move to the middle school.

SIAS report February 2009 Scissett First Scissett HD8 9HR