

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Sculthorpe Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Creake Road
Sculthorpe
Fakenham
Norfolk
NR21 9NQ

Diocese: Norwich

Local authority: Norfolk
Dates of inspection: 6th March 2008
Date of last inspection: 14th Nov. 2002
School's unique reference number: 121126
Headteacher: Mr John Marshall-Grint
Inspector's name: Mr Thomas Green

School context

This very small rural school works in partnership with West Raynham Voluntary Controlled Primary School, sharing a headteacher, who is on a temporary appointment pending the arrival of a permanent headteacher at Sculthorpe in April 2008. There are 34 pupils on roll. The percentages of pupils eligible for free meals and those with learning difficulties is about average. The majority of pupils are from White British heritage

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Sculthorpe as a Church of England school are good

The pupils benefit from being part of a learning community characterised by good provision for the needs of learners. This is underpinned by the Christian values shared by headteacher, staff and governors. The good level of Christian distinctiveness is recognised and valued by parents. Pupils enjoy the school and its delightful environment and feel happy and secure there. They are aware of the school's Anglican foundation and the continuing fruitful connection with the local church, which is anchored in the regular presence of the incumbent in the school.

Established strengths

- The pervading ethos of Christian care which underpins the very good relationships between adults and pupils
- The quiet confidence displayed by pupils and their willingness to work and play well together
- The support and involvement of the local clergy

Focus for development

- Provide opportunities for pupils to be more active participants in worship
- Make the Christian distinctiveness of the school more explicit within the mission statement and public school documents and other communications

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

The ever-present application of Christian values ensures that learners from all groups and backgrounds are given equal opportunities to develop their full potential. A combination of the impact of a dedicated and hard-working staff and the excellent relationships between pupils and all the adults who work or help in the school, ensure a calm, respectful and stimulating learning environment. Good consultation arrangements exist between the school and parents, who confirm that their views are appreciated. A large majority of parents are very happy with the school, speaking of it as being like a large family sharing the care and

overall development of their children. In return they are willing to give time and effort in supporting staff to meet the on-going and immediate needs of pupils. The good attention to the personal, social and emotional needs of learners is well recognised. Awards have been given to the school for actively promoting Healthy Eating and Well-being through various carefully planned programmes. All learners are made to feel valued. Staff members are effective in promoting the self-esteem of pupils through praise and during the weekly Celebration Assembly. Individual and group achievements in music and sport are recognised and celebrated. Learners enjoy being members of the School Council, where their views are listened to. They respond positively to responsibilities such as the organisation of charity fund raising events. Learners greatly enjoy the recent improvements in the school environment. This is particularly true of the outdoor play space, which although extremely small, has been sensitively designed and equipped in an exemplary and imaginative way. This is a calming and yet stimulating environment which contributes greatly to the spiritual development and quality of the social interaction of pupils.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Worship occupies a secure place in the life of the school. It is consistently and recognisably Christian, with a daily pattern of hymn, story and prayer. The majority of pupils find the acts of worship a positive experience and they join in enthusiastically when singing hymns and songs. The confidence of pupils in saying the Lord's Prayer is compromised by a lack of clarity and knowledge of the version being used, but worship leaders plan to rectify this. The weekly 'Celebration Assembly' is valued as a time to mark individual and group achievement and makes a valuable contribution to the social and personal development of pupils. School leaders recognise the constraints of the cramped space available in the multi-purpose 'mobile' classroom used for bringing the whole school together for worship. They also recognise the need to enhance the space with better visual stimuli as a backdrop or focus for worship. Although generally positive about the worship experience, many pupils are eager to be given more opportunity for active participation in leading worship. They would also appreciate more time for quiet reflection while the chosen music for the day is playing. They enjoy the contributions of visiting worship leaders including the weekly act of worship led by the local vicar. Opportunities to develop an understanding of Anglican faith and practice are provided by the use of themes relating to the major Christian festivals. To celebrate these the school holds a service within the nearby parish church or West Raynham church for Harvest, Christmas or Easter celebrations.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious Education is given a high priority by governors and staff, evidenced by the good quality of planning, teaching and recording of work. Subject leadership is occasionally constrained by the co-ordinator's location at the partner school, but joint training and shared guidance has been carefully programmed to ensure the full implementation of the 'New' Agreed Syllabus, good planning and the monitoring of lessons. Added impetus to the subject is achieved through the common use of Religious Education topics as the basis for more extended cross-curricular work, for example when studying signs and symbols. The quality of teaching and learning is good, supported by the good use by teachers of a range of IT based resources and good class-room techniques which include games, music, writing and art-work. The variety of activities and pace of lessons ensures that the interest and involvement of all learners is maintained. The work of both younger and older learners is proudly displayed in attractive individual class booklets. Younger learners are able to describe what they have learned about Christianity when talking about the parables of the Gospels. Older learners take a keen interest in their work and show from their discussions that they are learning from religions as well as about them. Their learning outcomes are most effective when work is well differentiated across the wide age-range of the class in which they find themselves, for example when they are given opportunities to express themselves such as when writing personal prayers in an anthology book of 'special things'. Their greater knowledge of Christianity than of other faiths reflects the relative weighting within the Agreed Syllabus. The good quality of their work demonstrates the positive attitude of learners to the subject. In learning from religions the subject makes a good contribution to their spiritual and moral development.

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

The leadership of the headteacher and governors makes an effective contribution to fostering the Christian ethos of the school; the importance of which is recognised and referred to in the school's published aims and in policy documents. During a period of considerable change the governors have continued to be supportive of the staff and pupils. A strong sense of responsibility and teamwork ensures that the school functions well whether the headteacher is on-site or at the partner school. Governors are active in many aspects of the life of the school and have made a particularly valuable contribution to the lengthy process of securing a new permanent headteacher for the school. The involvement of clergy in and beyond worship is greatly valued, but there are insufficient systems in place to encourage and challenge the school through the monitoring of worship and church school ethos by governors. The school's overall self-evaluation is accurate, but the leadership recognises that the school's aims do not make sufficient reference to the school's trust deed or its Mission Statement. Governors are beginning to consider a range of positive actions which will more clearly describe, celebrate and underpin the school's overall Christian distinctiveness as church school.

SIAS report March 2008 Sculthorpe C of E V A Primary NR21 9NQ