

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Sledmere Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Sledmere  
Driffield  
East Riding of Yorkshire  
YO25 3XP

#### **Diocese of York**

LA: East Riding of Yorkshire County Council  
Date of inspection: May 9<sup>th</sup> 2007  
Date of last inspection: 2002  
School's Unique reference number: 118028  
Headteacher Mr. Tim Brenchley  
SIAS Inspector NS 196 Mrs. Jill Pauling

#### **School context**

Sledmere VC Church of England Primary School has 44 pupils on roll, serving a wide, rural community. All the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils having special educational needs is below average. Pupils come from mixed social backgrounds.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Sledmere V.C. C. of E. Primary School as a Church of England school are good.**

A very distinctive Christian ethos permeates school life and brings positive values and attitudes to teaching and learning. These values and attitudes of mutual respect, care and love are embedded in every area of school life. The school's high expectations of all of its staff and pupils are promoted throughout the school and pupil achievement is good.

#### **Established strengths**

- There is a distinctive, inclusive Christian ethos with very good pastoral care.
- Pupils are confident, independent and well behaved and are treated as unique individuals.
- Strong relationships, underpinned by Christian values, flourish throughout the whole school community.
- There is a close and mutually supportive relationship between Church and School.

#### **Focus for development**

- Involve all relevant stakeholders in developing a sustainable system and procedures for planning, monitoring and evaluating collective worship.
- Involve foundation governors in updating the National Society toolkit.

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

The Christian ethos in the school is very strong and permeates every area from classroom practice to relationships and the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. This is the result of a total commitment of the whole school community to valuing each and every child as a unique individual. Christian values are evident in every part of school, particularly in the quality of pastoral support. Great emphasis is placed on forgiveness, fresh starts and equality and the impact of this is that pupils feel valued and confident that their voice will be heard. 'Teachers and grown ups are always fair' is the general consensus of opinion of the school council. The children's friendly, outgoing attitude to visitors reflects the secure, family nature of this church school. Achievement in all areas is celebrated in a special weekly act of worship and all pupils flourish. The excellent work in SMSC education throughout the school helps relate spiritual awareness to beliefs. Pupils with special educational needs thrive and improved behaviour in one child is celebrated as enthusiastically as academic achievement in another. Christian displays around the school provide an exceptional opportunity for the children to reflect on the special nature of their school as a church school. The school prayer has particular impact because it has been specially embroidered so that it can hang in the entrance where everyone can see it and read

it, emphasising the centrality of prayer in the school. The school's inclusive approach is embedded in all areas and greatly valued by both pupils and staff. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the inclusive and caring nature of the school. One parent stated that she couldn't be more happy because no matter what a child's ability, they would succeed. Pupils behave responsibly, respecting others and relationships throughout the school are excellent, as reflected in the way the older pupils both help and play with the younger ones at lunchtime. The whole school supports and becomes involved in raising impressive amounts of money for a variety of local and international charities. This in turn provides these children, living in a small rural community, with a wider Christian perspective on the world.

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

Worship plays a significant part in the daily life of the school. All staff take part and there is a strong sense of community involvement. Governors often attend and the local vicar leads an act of worship each week. The vicar is very active and involved, for example running Christian clubs for major events in the church calendar. These often culminate in a play, concert or celebration event that reinforces the gospel message. The children find these clubs helpful as a stepping-stone to regular church attendance. Pupils are well behaved during worship and are respectful and responsive to the spiritual content. The singing is good and Christian symbols and visual aids help promote a focus. Acts of worship are relevant and appropriately pitched with times for reflection and prayer supporting spiritual, moral and social development. Currently a review is being undertaken to look at long term planning and sustainable mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the impact of collective worship on the children and school community. Pupils speak freely and eloquently about the meaning and use of prayer acknowledging that God always hears. One child volunteered that 'we pray to Jesus to tell Him about our sad and our happy things'. Another reflected that prayer is a way of showing our belief in and respect for God which indicates that the pupils' spiritual development is influencing their daily lives. Parents speak about the impact that celebrating major Christian festivals has on the whole community with one parent stating that she had started to attend Sunday worship as a direct consequence of school. Worship is consistently Christian with strong Anglican elements such as the use of liturgical prayer and reference to the Church of England calendar. The whole school is involved with services within the local church and being a rural community, Harvest festival is regarded as a particularly significant event.

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

All the school community have a very strong sense of belonging to a church school. There is good evidence in documentation, display and practice to suggest that the headteacher, governors and staff work continuously to promote and articulate a distinctive Christian vision for the school. The headteacher has identified areas for development and has programmes of action in place. He is instrumental in raising the significance of the church school status within the school community and his leadership is outstanding. Documentation has been revised, a new RE co-ordinator appointed and collective worship included in the school development plan. All staff feel valued and affirmed. They speak of a strong team ethos based on Christian principles. New staff have been inducted skilfully. There are close, productive links with members of the local church. There is a very good, mutually supportive link between the headteacher and the vicar who are both proactive in promoting the ongoing Christian vision for this school. The Governors are all involved and provide appropriate challenge to the headteacher as well as encouraging new initiatives. They are keen to become more actively involved in monitoring RE and collective worship. The headteacher, with the foundation governor, has identified the continuous updating of the National Society toolkit as a priority. The vicar encourages the children's spiritual growth and understanding of Gospel teaching and is well supported by the foundation governor. The impact of RE teaching on pupils is good throughout the school. The RE co-ordinator has identified areas in which to work with the diocese to develop this area.