

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Martin's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Burnham Road
Owston Ferry
Doncaster DN9 1AY

Diocese: Lincoln

Local authority: North Lincolnshire
Dates of inspection: 28 January 2009
Date of last inspection: 17 and 19 January 2006
School's unique reference number: 118037
Headteacher: Mrs J A Buckle
Inspector's name and number: Mrs Paulette Bissell 88

School context

This is a smaller than average primary school, located in a rural village in North Lincolnshire. Of the 103 pupils very few are from minority ethnic backgrounds or have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly higher than average. The school is part of a confederation with another Church of England school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Owston Ferry St Martin's Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

This well led school with a strong Christian ethos has a special place at the heart of the village community. The exciting and secure learning environment that has been created has generated openness to matters of faith and an awareness of the importance of spiritual development and the nurture of each individual.

Established strengths

- The inspirational leadership of the Headteacher and her team in successfully implementing practices and systems that explicitly express the Christian foundation of the school.
- The highly supportive, spiritual and inclusive ethos of the school.
- The positive learning environment and strong relationships with the church and local community.

Focus for development

- Formalise evaluation of worship in order to develop and extend its impact on all members of the school community.
- Extend pupils' experience of faiths other than Christianity through Religious Education.

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

There is a great sense of pride and confidence in being part of this well led place of learning. Everyone is appreciative of the efforts that are made on their behalf to help them flourish. Pupils particularly identify the extra support that they receive whenever it is necessary. Staff members are similarly appreciative of the support mechanisms and the excellent organisation that enables them to develop their individual skills. Pastoral concerns are sensitively dealt

with by the whole community. The strong Christian ethos is discerned by everyone and is regarded as an influential and highly regarded element of the life of the school. This is recognisable through the headteacher's insistence on the priority that is given to collective worship and religious education, the place given to prayer and reflection and the resulting high standards in spiritual and moral education. The confidence shown by the pupils when speaking about religious and faith matters is another indicator of the overall importance of a school rooted in Christian values. The great number of extra curricular activities and charitable pursuits on offer to the pupils, such as the link with Uganda enriches their school life and enhances their spiritual, social and cultural development. Enjoyment is an important part of the ethos of the school and was identified by a parent who said that a lot of 'rejoicing' takes place and when a newly arrived Year 6 spoke of 'children are allowed to be children'. This makes for a happy school. Since the last inspection the elected school council has become a stronger means by which pupils' views may be shared. It is gradually developing a dynamic role within the school and has been instrumental in supporting the whole school drive for healthy school status and improving the school facilities.

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

The Headteacher has successfully prioritised the development of worship and it has become a central feature of the life of the school with all staff attending and participating. There is a recognition and appreciation of the good planning, organisation and importance of the event. The Headteacher and staff regularly lead worship well supported by a number of regular guest contributors, including the chair of governors and the local Anglican and Methodist clergy. These visitors are welcomed and valued. They are affirmed in their standing with the pupils by the reinforcement by the headteacher of the messages that they communicate. This emphasises the Christian underpinning and the strong links with the church. Through these interactions pupils have the opportunity to build up a broad understanding of Christianity and engage with matters of faith. For some pupils the many visits to the church for worship in school time and for Sunday worship is giving opportunities for faith to grow. This is appreciated by several parents who want this spiritual engagement for their children. One parent was delighted with the hymn singing and discussion of a religious nature that were generated from school activities. In collective worship and in reflection times pupils of all ages are given time for thought and prayer. This process is started in a powerful way with the youngest pupils having time to reflect and use their class prayer box thus creating a culture of openness to discussion about beliefs and practice. This gives pupils the impressive confidence to speak in front of the assembled school of their understanding of such things as faith and trust. The development of a system to evaluate the experiences of all participants in collective worship and class reflection times would enable firm judgements to be made on the impact of worship and how to shape it in the future.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

There is a positive attitude to religious education throughout the school due to the emphasis that is placed on the subject by the leadership team. There is a generous lesson time allocation and cross curricular teaching is encouraged. This is a well led area of the curriculum by an able, enthusiastic specialist teacher who arranges the provision of in service training for staff. Monitoring procedures are also in place and are impacting positively on the quality of teaching. The teaching and learning are judged to be good particularly pupils responses to thought provoking questions. Throughout the school pupils are given opportunities to think and to question, resulting in pupils who are extremely confident and thoughtful in responding to deep questions. Pupils have a wide experience and knowledge of Christianity. This is gained through the subject, collective worship and the many experiences that are offered to them by the local Anglican and Methodist Christian community. At times the locally Agreed Syllabus is adapted to link with the school themes. There is a recognised need to widen the pupils' experiences of other faiths. There is a clear vision for extending the development of religious education particularly through assessment and experiences of a

variety of faiths. The staff have the support, capacity and enthusiasm to do this and have recognised it as an area for development.

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

The Headteacher is an outstanding communicator and has been able to develop with the leadership team and governors in a dynamic way the vision of a school committed to high quality learning strengthened by its overt Christian underpinning. The highly professional leadership team and committed governors work extremely well together. Their shared interest in religious education and collective worship and their many skills has enabled them to strengthen these areas of school life and the school's distinctiveness. The welcome and positive links with the clergy, the many visits to church and involvement in activities such as Remembrance Day make the school integral to the life of the village. Involvement in these activities familiarises the pupils with the rhythm of the church year and the major Christian festivals. In response to the previous Section 48 the leadership team has been successful in developing the Christian distinctiveness of the school. The self evaluation of the school was extremely thorough in its highlighting of the many recent developments, exciting activities and initiatives that are valued by all. The leadership team has clear aspirations for the future of this school with the continuation of its strong Christian underpinning. One parent's comment *'to find a school that says it is Church of England and it is'*, is an opinion held by many.

SIAS report January 2009. Owston Ferry St Martin's Church of England Primary School, Owston Ferry, Doncaster DN9 1AY