

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Mary's Hinckley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Station Road
Hinckley
Leicestershire
LE10 1AW

Diocese: Leicester

Local Authority: Leicestershire

Dates of inspection: 19th and 20th September 2007

Date of last inspection: 25th and 29th November 2005

School's Unique Ref. No: 120134

Name of Head teacher: Mrs Carol Cooper

Inspector's name and number: Mairi Mowbray 94

School Context

St. Mary's is a popular school situated in the centre of Hinckley next to the parish church. Its Victorian accommodation has been extended many times and outdoor space is limited. A leased former town library is used as the hall and for additional teaching space. There are 280 pupils on roll whose cultural background is mainly white British. The headteacher joined the school just over two years ago and has led the school through major changes which have positively impacted upon all learners.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Mary's CE Primary as a Church of England school are good.

St Mary's is a school striving hard to provide a high standard of education for all learners and to promote Christian values. It is supported in its aims by parents and a committed governing body.

Established strengths

- Collective worship is of a consistently high standard
- Spiritual and moral education have a very positive effect on behaviour and relationships
- Strong links with the church and community have been maintained and built on

Focus for development

- The governing body should use the Diocesan "Toolkit" to monitor and evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Mary's as a church school
- Development of the hall to provide an environment more conducive to worship

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

There are many visible signs of the school's Christian character in classrooms and shared areas. Bright and interactive displays effectively support religious education and general learning. The Lords' prayer is known and is displayed in all classrooms. Parents are happy that the school promotes Christian values and actively support the worshipping life of the school through attendance at class and church worship. Learners enjoy school and feel they have a valued contribution to make. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and religious education teaching have a very positive effect on learners' developing social skills and attitudes. Learners are becoming increasingly independent and accountable for their own behaviour and actions. Older learners, for example, are given the responsibility of guiding visitors around the school and planning charitable fundraising activities. Bibles presented to each learner for use in school (different editions for use at each Key Stage) are treasured. Provision for learners with special needs is good and the school is planning improved provision for more able learners.

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

Collective worship is clearly a central feature of the school day. Learners experience a range of styles of worship from whole school, to smaller gatherings by key stage and class. These offer a consistently good experience of worship matched to learners' needs and stage of learning. Important events in the school and Christian year are celebrated in church and learners are taking an increasing part in leading these services. The hall does not provide the ideal setting for worship, having restricted space and being in need of major refurbishment, however, use of symbols (candle, cross, Bible and posters) effectively focus learners' attention on worship. Times of silent reflection and prayer are used to help learners consider the significance of the message for their own lives. The singing of upbeat songs with simple, Christian, messages of love and hope, contribute to learners' enjoyment of worship, and memorizing the message has a positive effect on behaviour, as well as reinforcing the sense of community. The contributions of the vicar along with other town church leaders and visitors to leading worship are greatly valued.

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

In a relatively short period, the headteacher has succeeded in re-establishing a clear vision for the school as a church school and has inspired staff and governors to work hard to make many positive changes. Raising the profile of collective worship, religious education and spiritual, moral, social and cultural education have been key to strengthening the distinctive Christian character of the school. Subject managers' role reorganisation has empowered the RE co-ordinator to restructure religious education teaching and to support staff in teaching Christianity and other faiths in exciting and relevant ways thereby enhancing learners' enjoyment and learning. All staff take part in the teaching of religious education and in leading worship. There are strong links with the parish and town churches and learners particularly appreciate the annual Bible exhibitions organized by the Baptist church. Parents and governors are very supportive of the school's aims; however, evaluation of the school's effectiveness as a church school by the governing body has been too informal.

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Hinckley Leicestershire LE10 1AW September 2007