

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Sutton-cum-Lound Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Portland Place  
Sutton-cum-Lound  
Retford  
Nottinghamshire  
DN22 8PP

#### **Diocese: Southwell and Nottingham**

Local authority: Nottinghamshire  
Dates of inspection: 25 February 2008  
Date of last inspection: February 2003  
School's unique reference number: 122809  
Headteacher: Mr Robert Vickers  
Inspector's name and number: Mr John Hoare (NS 222)

#### **School context**

The school serves two small village communities which form one parish. Founded in 1783, it now operates in modern premises (1970) on an attractive site, which is well-maintained as a learning resource. The number of pupils on roll is 61 and declining, which is a major challenge for the governing body. There has been no resident vicar since 2006.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Sutton-cum-Lound Primary School as a Church of England school are good.**

Its distinctiveness is clear in the positive way that Christian values permeate relationships and in the value given to every individual. The strength of the teamwork of Headteacher, staff and governors ensures that the school's work is effective in promoting its Christian ethos and in developing the talents and character of all learners.

#### **Established strengths**

- Excellent personal relationships at all levels.
- The variety of approaches and material used to teach Religious Education.
- The range of opportunities on offer to promote the development of the whole person.

#### **Focus for development**

- The governing body should seek appropriate measures to strengthen the link with the parish church.
- Opportunities should be sought to develop simple ceremony and children's' leadership in collective worship

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

The great strength of the school is its Christian ethos, through which every child is known, valued and encouraged. Personal relationships at all levels display Christian values, including between the pupils; patience and understanding is demonstrated by the help provided for children who have problems in their everyday lives. Children enjoy their school, which provides education for the whole person; they are generally confident and outgoing. Achievement is recognised in the weekly celebration assembly. A good range of activities, including residential education for Years 5 and 6, opportunities to exercise responsibility around the school, fund-raising for charities and a supportive behaviour policy all contribute to the spiritual and moral development of all learners. Likewise pupils are displaying environmental consciousness and action, as in their major contribution to enhancing the school grounds and in a letter to the local supermarket about packaging which does not

degrade. The School Council displayed growing maturity in handling its first case of alleged misbehaviour; at all levels all pupils are listened to seriously. The whole environment of the school with its quality displays provides appropriate encouragement and support to general learning.

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

Daily collective worship provides the whole school community with a positive start and a Christian focus for the day ahead; there is a well-planned programme of themes. Children enjoy the variety of worship, to which visiting leaders contribute, join in the singing and the Lord's Prayer well and are keen to answer questions and take part. Older children performed their own short sketches to illustrate the fruits of the spirit, which the children remembered successfully; such acts of worship are promoting their spiritual growth. Regular use of the parish church and commemoration of Christian festivals develops their understanding of Anglican practice. Appropriate music accompanies orderly entering and leaving the hall, while a cross and a candle provide a focus. The children can explain the symbolism of the candle, although there is no ceremony around its lighting. Good examples of pupils' own prayers were seen; however, their use in worship is not regular practice. More opportunities to take part would enhance further worship which is already effective in its impact on the participants.

**The effectiveness of the religious education is good.**

The commendable variety of methods and material used to teach religious education (RE) contributes effectively to pupils' obvious enthusiasm for and interest in the subject. Clear progression is evident in the substantial portfolios of children's work and in their knowledge in response to questioning. Art, drama, imaginative writing (such as Abraham's diary) and appropriate worksheets promote successful learning. While the youngest pupils spoke clearly about baptism, Years 3 and 4 displayed understanding of parables; for example, one child's verdict on the story of the paralysed man "His friends had faith". Older pupils had tackled successfully a variety of challenges in applying faith through such topics as 'God thoughts', heroes and leadership and the environment. This demonstrated the contribution of RE to their spiritual and moral development. In an observed lesson comparing faiths through an exercise with artefacts, a boy working on Hinduism was heard to say that "gods in the plural must be lower case", impressive evidence of successful learning. From the 'strangeness' of artefacts of other faiths, pupils have learned respect for difference. The Headteacher himself teaches RE while the class teachers link the work in RE into the rest of the curriculum effectively. RE is very well resourced.

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

The Headteacher and governors are actively committed to their promotion of a distinctive Christian vision for the school, with the whole staff working as a team to ensure that this ethos permeates all aspects of the life of the school very obviously and convincingly. The mission statement, as displayed, represents this vision fully; however, its wording would benefit from review. A foundation governor has particular responsibility to monitor Christian distinctiveness, while the Headteacher reports regularly on progress in areas specific to the church school. The school operates an 'open door' policy and has excellent relationships with the parents, with the staff being quick to pick up and respond positively to any problems. Parents are well informed about topics of study and activities and are invited to special services, giving active support to their school. Both new parents and potential members of staff are made aware of the church status of the school. The school has productive and supportive links with individual church members and the wider local community, but there has been a lack of support from the wider church since the departure of the last vicar 2 years ago.