

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Whissendine Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Main Street
Whissendine
Rutland
LE15 7ET

Diocese: Peterborough

Local authority: Rutland

Status: Voluntary Controlled

Dates of inspection: December 6th 2006

Date of last inspection: 2002

School's unique reference number: 120183

Headteacher: Mr Robert Gooding

Inspector's name and number: Revd. Michael Asquith (317)

School context

Whissendine School serves the village of Whissendine, but many pupils come to the school from outside the village because of its reputation. There are five classes. All pupils speak English as their first language.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Whissendine School as a Church of England school are outstanding

"Best for all; best from all" is the school's strap-line, which perfectly summarises the learning, teaching, relationships and all that pertains to Whissendine School. Learning and monitoring are always evaluated to "NICE" criteria [new learning, inclusive learning, creative learning, enjoyable learning.] Established Christian values underpin all activity within the school. Parents feel that the school offers best value to their children.

Established strengths

- The relationships across the school in which all groups of people are treated as equal partners
- The strong and very evident Christian ethos pervading all areas of the school's life.
- The strong relationship between Whissendine School and the parish church
- The new values statement and the Christian values shared by the school with the school prayer at their centre

Focus for development

- Co-ordinate the many areas of multi-cultural education happening throughout the school and the school curriculum in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of the current situation
- Provide opportunities for all the staff to join in all acts of collective worship so the whole school community gathers together.

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

There is a real sense of partnership throughout the school in which each member is part of a team. The school council, two representatives elected by each class council, makes important decisions so ownership of all that happens is shared throughout the school. All pupils feel cared for and safe; they feel they are important; they speak of the school as being inclusive to all. Visitors are greeted very warmly; parents feel they are equally as valued and welcomed as the pupils. At the heart of the school life is the recently revised documentation of Christian values that the school seeks to aspire to; these are displayed throughout the school, with the school prayer in the centre. The shared values of the school include reference to a strong relationship with the local church, Christian values being at the centre of

all aspects of school life and understanding other faiths and cultures. Parents speak highly of the school's efforts to fulfil these aims. There are outstanding links with the church, for example when the church meets at the school to celebrate Education Sunday and the use of the church by the school as a learning environment as in the recent harvest and forthcoming Christmas celebrations. The foundation governors are active in developing new, and strengthening existing, links with the church. There are very good links with the local community too, for example the sharing in the village's Posada celebrations of Advent and links with other major Christian groups are being developed. The school has strong links with the local pre-school and with the young children's group attached to the church – Holy Terrors. A parent described the school as “being impressively and deeply committed to the care of each individual child” and this is true for all children. There are fresh and colourful displays around the school some of which make reference to the many charities recently supported, like the banner for Fairtrade in the main entrance to the school. A recent development to the school has included a covered area for the foundation stage curriculum and appropriate play and learning equipment.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

There is a range of different styles of worship. The parish priest visits the school and leads lively collective worship most weeks and the pupils look forward to this. A local pastor from a nearby village regularly visits the school too. The deputy head teacher leads the worship each Thursday concentrating on one of the chosen key figures forming part of the term's reward system; as of next term this initiative will be led in partnership with the year 6 pupils. One act of worship was observed in which two carols were sung very well, accompanied by a teacher on the piano and the school orchestra. The pupils arrived in, and left the hall in an orderly manner with recorded music being played. Three candles are lit at the beginning of each act of collective worship, representing the school, the family and friends of each member of the school community and the world whilst all pupils join in saying the school prayer. Pupils know and use the Lord's Prayer too. Pupils enjoy collective worship and can remember not only what happened but also the appropriate message. The worship is planned throughout the year and is regularly monitored by the foundation governors. Classes have their own prayer books and there is a prayer tree in the entrance hall, for which all pupils are invited to write prayers. Grace is said at meal times and classes are able to begin and end the day with a time of prayer. Good use is made of quiet times, both during lessons and in worship times for reflection.

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

The Headteacher has a strong Christian vision for the school which has been shared infectiously amongst all members of the school community so that leadership is shared throughout. In response to recent pupil concern about behaviour within one or two individuals, the school council devised a behaviour policy which was implemented throughout the school and even wrote the template letter to go home if an appropriate level of misbehaviour was ever reached. During the inspection pupils worked conscientiously and diligently and there was no evidence of inappropriate behaviour. Older pupils look after younger pupils through the playground “buddy” system. Staff are encouraged by the enthusiastic Headteacher to develop the areas for which they are responsible and to share their aspirations. All policies have been reviewed within the last year and make reference to the Christian foundation of the school. Policies are full inclusive taking account of pupils with all abilities, and their outcomes are evidenced through the school. Governors regularly visit the school and are involved in all aspects of monitoring. Recently spirituality was mapped throughout the curriculum and it is the intention to repeat this exercise to show the many multi-cultural activities that there are available for the pupils [during the week of the inspection there were visits by a Hindu priest and a Jewish family and a visit by the school to a Hindu temple]. The school took part in the village's Posada celebrations – a Mexican commemoration of Advent. There is an active Parents Association which organises both fund-raising and social events.