



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Nettleham Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior School

Mill Hill
Nettleham
Lincoln
LN2 2PE

Diocese: Lincoln

Local authority: Lincolnshire
Dates of inspection: 21.05.09
Date of last inspection: 14th and 18th November 2005
School's unique reference number: 120626
Headteacher: Headteacher: Mr David Gibbons
Inspector's name and number: Mr G Marsden NS 381

School context

Nettleham Church of England Junior School is an average-sized junior school serving a large village just outside the city of Lincoln, where the majority of 226 pupils live. The percentage of pupils from relatively advantaged backgrounds is higher than average. Most pupils are of white British heritage. A higher than average proportion have statements of special educational needs.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Nettleham Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior School as a Church of England school are good.

Christian principles learned in religious education are lived out in practice in this school. The very high level of support for the personal development of the pupils, set within the context of deep commitment to Christian principles, is very effective in moving forward its vision. The leadership of the headteacher in maintaining and developing the school's distinctive Christian ethos has been critical in its success.

Established strengths

- The clear Christian vision of the headteacher, effectively supported by his Governors and staff, providing good leadership and a clear direction for further improvement.
- Commitment to valuing equally the contribution of every individual.
- The nurturing of the Christian faith amongst the pupils, supported by high quality religious education.

Focus for development

- Ensure that public documentation clearly expresses the Christian values and principles that underpin the work of the school.
- Involve more members of the school community in the planning and evaluation of collective worship.
- Develop the use of formal summative assessment in religious education.

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

The school provides exceptionally good support for the personal development of its pupils based on a sound appreciation of Christian beliefs and values. The atmosphere is positive, inclusive and mutually respectful. This is due to careful planning. Pupils say that their ideas are listened to and acted upon. For instance, Year 6 pupils wrote, produced and acted the Easter drama production with minimal adult involvement. Pupils are polite and helpful to each

other, with Year 6 pupils having been trained to take responsibility for managing the calm and positive playground atmosphere. Pupils of differing backgrounds are very well supported and feel that their beliefs are respected by everyone. For example, one pupil from a non-Christian faith background expressed great appreciation for the interest shown by other members of the school in his beliefs and culture. Christian values are inherent in the school's excellent and effective approaches to conflict resolution. Pupils report that the 'zero tolerance' approach to bullying gives them great confidence and leads to swift reconciliation between individuals. The school's excellent standard of care for every individual is evident in the comments of parents who are appreciative of the school's concern for the 'whole child'. One parent spoke of the way in which the staff, 'Really know and like your child. They go out of their way to inform you about the positive as well as the negative'. The development of spirituality is of a high standard. Parents feel that their families' Christian faith is nurtured and supported very well by the school. Pupils speak with confidence and clear awareness and understanding of Christianity and of Christian values. Members of the school council were able to discuss the impact of such values in a sophisticated and wide-ranging manner.' "I feel closer to God at school than I do at home". The curriculum is planned carefully and to a high standard, with ample opportunities for pupils to reflect upon their role in wider society. This work is supported by high quality and challenging experiences such as the visit to the Holocaust Centre.

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

The school expresses its aims and the importance of collective worship clearly and effectively in its policy documentation. Pupils were observed to be engaged by and involved in the act of worship and enter and leave the hall respectfully. They have a good knowledge of prayers including the Lord's Prayer and understand how to create and maintain a prayerful atmosphere. They sing well. Most adult members of the school attend collective worship, but school policy means that few are involved in its planning or delivery. The pupils' creative skills have been harnessed very effectively in order to produce a stimulating and reflective prayer environment in the school hall. Collective worship is organised and planned to a good standard and is generally led by the headteacher. Pupils appreciate his approach and feel that they gain benefit from his stories. One pupil stated that the headteacher 'works hard to put things in context'. At present there are only limited opportunities for pupils to influence the planning of collective worship or the content of prayer. There are good links between the local churches and the school and worship is regularly led by the Incumbent or members of the Methodist Church and local House Churches. All the major Christian festivals are celebrated in the local parish church. These include Harvest, Advent, Lent and End-of-Year services. Events such as these are very well supported by the parents, and involvement in the parish church ensures that collective worship is firmly rooted in Anglican tradition and practice. As a result of the parish-school links, some former pupils have recently begun preparation for confirmation. The school is a regular participant in the Church Schools' Festival, which helps pupils to understand their position within the Diocesan family.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding.

Religious education (RE) plays an important part in the life of the school and is structured around the local agreed syllabus which has been adapted and extended to very good effect. Pupils make excellent progress and reach very good standards. This is because the subject is delivered by a team of dedicated teachers whose work is carefully co-ordinated and the outcomes evaluated. Pupils' work is very well assessed and informs future planning. However, the summative analysis of results is under-developed. Pupils readily express their enjoyment of the subject, and their spiritual development is significantly enhanced as a result of this and the high quality of teaching. The school's self-designed units give pupils a firm grasp of Christianity, and coverage of other major world faiths such as Hinduism and Judaism is enhanced by visits, contacts and good resources. A letter from a Holocaust survivor who had worked with the pupils, referred positively to the depth of their interest and understanding. Lessons are often outstanding. In one Year 3 class children learnt about what Jesus said about himself. The 'I am' statements were skilfully explored using symbolic objects that engaged the pupils and enhanced their understanding. In a Year 6 class pupils explored the language of The Bible and were able to discuss at a very high level the need to relate the language of scripture to current cultural settings. Human and other resources were very well utilised in both these lessons. Very high levels of attainment were noted in written

work, for example in the Year 6 'Own Creation Stories'. Pupils are able to link RE to life because the subject is often linked to other areas of the curriculum as seen in the recent 'Resurrection Rock' performance. The resourcing of RE is always a priority for the management team, and this leads to the subject receiving appropriate curricular status.

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

The headteacher provides outstanding Christian leadership for all those involved in the life of the school. Pupils, parents and staff are inspired by his strong application of Christian principles in communicating a vision for the school. Staff members said, 'You go in to see him with a problem and come out with it solved', and "He always goes the extra step". The school functions well as a Christian community because of the quality of the headteacher's leadership, and the high degree of support for this from the staff and governors. Pupils are able to explain what being part of such a community feels like; "People respect me". Parents' experiences are supportive of this; "All the staff are well aware of the school's Christian foundation". This leads to good levels of understanding by all members of the school community. However, the value structure that underpins this good practice is not always clearly articulated in policy documentation. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school, know its work well and have a secure view of its values, strengths and areas for development. A team structure means that all governors are able effectively to exercise their role as 'critical friends'. The school has made very good progress in addressing the areas for development highlighted in the last inspection report. However, the governing body is ambitious to improve the effectiveness of links between the school and the parish. The Incumbent is appreciative of the willingness of the school to facilitate her work and 'feels free to innovate'. Very good ecumenical work is carried out. For example an after-school RE club facilitated by the school, is run by members of all three churches in the village. Pupils are encouraged to explore similarities and differences within their lives leading to better social cohesion.

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