



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Rothersthorpe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Street
Rothersthorpe
NN7 3HS

Diocese: Peterborough

Local authority: Northamptonshire

Dates of inspection: 23 January 2014

Date of last inspection: 18 May 2009

School's unique reference number: 122014

Headteacher: Nicola Fountain

Inspector's name and number: Janet McMurdo 529

School context

This is a small village primary school in a rural location with 93 pupils in mixed age classes serving the village of Rothersthorpe and a nearby area of Northampton. The school has a mainly white British population (96.7%), few pupils are eligible for free school meals and none has English as an additional language. A new headteacher joined the school in September 2013 and has implemented some changes to the staffing structure which have resulted in a new Key Stage I teacher and a teaching assistant joining the school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Rothersthorpe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

- The leadership of the school, including governance, has in recent months had a significant role in raising the status of the school as a church school
- The school self evaluation is accurate and demonstrates the school becoming an increasingly reflective organisation
- The quality of relationships between pupils in the school is very high
- Communication with parents, which enables them to be more fully involved in the life of the school, has increased in recent months resulting in a parental perception that their opinions are valued and appropriate changes are being made
- The strengthening of relationships with the local parish church enables foundation governors to fulfil their role effectively and pupils to report a strong connection with their linked church
- The data presented indicates that standards in religious education (RE) are in line with achievements in other core National Curriculum subjects

Areas to improve

- Ensure a regular cycle of review is established involving all members of the school community and bringing rigour to developing the school as a church school.
- Involve pupils more in collective worship by enabling them to both lead more regularly

and routinely evaluate the experiences they receive from others.

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

The school has a strong Christian character which was clearly articulated by all stakeholders and evidenced in the high quality relationships throughout the school, especially when pupils were communicating with each other. The Christian character of the school contributes to the academic achievement of pupils because all pupils know they are expected to do their best but are also valued as unique human beings. Attainment is good as is attendance and the school works flexibly to meet the needs of diverse cohorts. The Values programme, which is the basis of Collective Worship, is shared via newsletters with all families so that it can be built upon at home. It also impacts at a whole school level through the rewards system in classes and is clearly evidenced in a high quality interactive display in the entrance to the school. The spiritual, moral social and cultural development of pupils has been enhanced in recent months, and now is good, because it has been prioritised through the School Development plan resulting in increased governor monitoring and investment.

Although Rothersthorpe CE Primary School has a school population which is largely white British the school has developed, in recent years, a link with a school in the centre of Northampton with a diverse population. Enabling this to be enhanced so that pupils can develop a high degree of understanding and respect for diversity and difference will help the school towards an outstanding judgement. High quality learning in religious education (RE) has ensured that standards are in line with other National Curriculum subjects. A particularly good example of RE teaching being used effectively for cross-curricular learning was seen in the work of pupils in lower Key Stage 2 who recounted the story of the Good Samaritan as a first person experience, thus potentially enhancing standards in English as well as in RE.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

All stakeholders clearly articulate the importance of worship in their lives and particularly value the recent developments in the school which enable parents to participate in the weekly sharing assembly. The space used by the school for Collective Worship is shared with the local community but the staff have worked hard to create displays and a focus for the worship which encourages a calm and respectful atmosphere. On the day of the inspection the worship experienced by the whole school involved pupils in drama, prayer and singing. The focus for the worship was the theme of Christian Unity which pupils were clearly helped to understand because of the visual example used by the headteacher, who filled a container with differing coloured sands, emphasising the idea that we are greater together than as our separate parts. Time for reflection and a respectful recital of the Lord's Prayer, which was known by all pupils in Key Stage 2, ensured the experience enabled individuals to gain personally. The whole school community joined in enthusiastically with good quality sung worship and the pupil group interviewed stated that this was a usual style of worship; this was supported by the planning folders seen. Local clergy and other Christian visitors lead worship in the school each week; these occasions are particularly enjoyed and valued by pupils. Planning is well developed and shows ways in which the school teaches clearly about the life of Jesus Christ and the Trinity; this was endorsed during discussion with the incumbent who is a foundation governor. The impact of collective worship is not outstanding because a regular system is not in place by which all can be consulted about the quality of worship and because pupils do not have regular opportunity to lead.

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

The school has a clear Christian vision which has been formulated with all stakeholders in recent months. It is visible as you enter the school and is displayed around the building. Pupils are proud of their involvement in its creation and are excitedly awaiting the result of the home

project to design a new school logo which more accurately reflects the school as a Church School. There is appropriate emphasis on all pupils achieving high standards and good quality self evaluation and development planning ensure any area where standards aren't as high is quickly identified and strategies put in place to remediate. Since the arrival of the new headteacher in September 2013 many developments have enhanced the school as a church school most significantly being the establishing of a foundation governor monitoring group which has ensured that an appropriate focus is placed on the church dimension of the school, including ensuring that there is effective self-evaluation. Issues from the last inspection have been effectively addressed by senior leaders; a comprehensive self-evaluation document and key areas identified in the school development plans ensure that priority is given to developing the school as a church school. However, the impact of leadership and management is not yet outstanding because a rigorous system for monitoring and evaluating the church dimension of the school is not yet fully embedded and involving all stakeholders. The role of the governing body in evaluating all aspects of the school has been enhanced in recent months and they are now well placed to effectively hold the school to account for all aspects of work. There are good relationships with the local parish church and the recent introduction of an award for year 6 pupils enhances this further.. The religious education (RE) coordinator undertakes evaluation of the school performance data and reports that standards in RE are in line with other National Curriculum subjects. Some monitoring of other aspects of RE have been undertaken but this is not yet outstanding as all aspects of the RE curriculum aren't treated with the same rigour. The recent changes in senior leadership at the school has enabled partnership working within the cluster to be developed to increase opportunities for collaboration thus helping all teachers to benefit; this is particularly helpful as colleagues change roles and new staff arrive. Arrangements for religious education and collective worship meet statutory requirements.

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