

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Guilsborough Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

The Green
Guilsborough
Northamptonshire
NN6 8PT

Diocese: Peterborough

Local authority: Northamptonshire
Date of inspection: February 16 2011
Date of last inspection: March 11 2008
School's unique reference number: 122022
Headteacher: Philip Henretty
Inspector's name and number: Mrs Hilary Spenceley 370

School context

This is a smaller than average school located in a village a few miles to the north of Northampton. Pupils come from Guilsborough and a number of nearby villages. Nearly all pupils are of a White British background. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, as is the number eligible for free school meals.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Guilsborough Voluntary Aided Primary as a Church of England school are good

This is an inclusive, caring school where Christian values motivate daily life. Pupils feel valued as individuals, confident that they will be helped to achieve, whatever their talents. Considerate relationships between all members of the school community enable everyone to make a positive contribution to school life, to care for one another and to contribute to the overall development of the school

Established strengths

- Very good relationships based on Christian values through which pupils are encouraged to accept responsibility for their actions and take account of the needs of others
- Strong leadership of the headteacher who models Christian principles creating an ethos which is clearly valued by pupils and staff and provides a welcome for parents
- Effective links with the communities from which the pupils come

Focus for development

- Assign within the governance structure a robust system for formally gathering views on the school as a church school, evaluating the findings and using them to inform future developments
- Identify a biblical link for each of the school's selected Christian values, incorporate these into the vision statement, publicise and promote widely
- Seek opportunities to link with a local multi-cultural school to broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding of other faiths and cultures

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

There is a definite emphasis on inclusion throughout the school based on Christian values, which include care, forgiveness and honesty. All understand that working together supportively produces a harmonious community and there is much evidence to attest to this. Pupils are proud of one another's achievements and older pupils display a mature approach

towards helping the younger children and those who find learning less easy. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong and can link their behaviour to teaching on Christian values. If disagreement arises pupils know where to seek assistance and recognise the importance of resolving issues in a spirit of forgiveness and honesty. Staff capitalise on the school's rural setting by encouraging pupils to see God in creation. Vegetables grown in the pupils' garden plots are cooked and eaten in school; pupils say that this brings seedtime and harvest alive to them and gives them a better understanding of the cycle of food production on a larger scale. They are aware of life in countries where circumstances are much harder than theirs, energetically fund-raising for a variety of causes. Current email links with communities abroad could be supplemented by linking with a school in this country whose pupils come from diverse backgrounds. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Displays and symbols show that this is a school proud to be a church school. Parents believe that their children are well prepared for life through all that the school teaches them, especially the moral values which strongly influence their thinking and behaviour.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is well planned, recorded and evaluated by the headteacher, who is the co-ordinator. A recent initiative to include senior leaders in this is assuring a broader knowledge base and security of continuity. Pupils are familiar with many aspects of Anglican tradition and practice, including eucharist,. Worship is referred to as assembly; it takes place daily and all staff are expected to attend. Parents feel welcome whenever they wish to join in; they value highly the Christian teaching which their children often talk about at home. Pupils enjoy assembly and appreciate the fact that their views help to influence changes, such as the recent introduction of separate key stage worship. They benefit from the variety of staff and visitors who lead assembly and the many presentation styles used, which, they say, makes worship "really good". Pupils spiritual and moral development benefits greatly from the good scriptural teaching and varied styles of worship. During the assembly observed, pupils participated enthusiastically at all stages, remained engaged throughout, singing well and responding appropriately. A Bible text on the screen with accompanying flickering candle illustrated the theme of light and formed an effective backdrop to the talk. Pupils willingly assisted the headteacher to demonstrate different sources of light, pleased to be chosen to help. In response to pupils' requests they are now more frequently involved in leading assembly. During the current interregnum, Rev'd Mark, the part-time priest, is actively supporting the school, both in leading assemblies, and in services and learning activities at the church. The last inspection report asked the school to concentrate on developing the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship. This has been addressed effectively with pupils' views sought and acted upon. Parents and others should now be included in this process.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Pupils enjoy their RE lessons and staff enjoy teaching the subject. There is a wide variety of teaching methods employed which meets the needs and encourages the talents of all. Knowledge and understanding of RE is recorded in a variety of ways from traditional bookwork to drama, displays and discussion. Pupils' spiritual and moral awareness develops well through RE. They talk with enthusiasm about what they learn and can relate this to their own lives. One pupil explained that this helps them "to do what's right, not what's easy". Pupils have a good knowledge of the Christian faith and of other faiths, recognising the importance of respecting differences. The Yearbooks contain a colourful record of RE displays, work and visits to places of worship, including those of other faiths. Parents value the insight RE gives into religion; one parent observed that in their household "all religious knowledge comes from the school". Improved tracking and assessment systems now show clearly that standards in RE are comparable with other subjects, where, by the time pupils leave, they typically reach above average levels. The school follows the Northamptonshire Agreed syllabus. The RE co-ordinator manages the subject efficiently, has a good grasp of levels throughout the school and encourages variety. She and other staff access training, which has resulted in new initiatives being introduced. Since the last inspection, good progress has been made in the specified areas of RE identified as a focus for development, leading to a general improvement in the effectiveness of RE.

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

The headteacher is the driving force behind the school's clear Christian vision which has been very well maintained for many years and is now increasingly well promoted through the website and documentation. The governing body actively supports the school's Christian vision and aims. This vision is based upon specific Christian values, which are known and understood by the school community; it would help to promote the vision further to set each value within a biblical context and publicise more widely. Parents are very happy with what and how pupils learn and the wealth of opportunities offered from which they gain skills and knowledge to equip them for later life, most significantly, a grounding in moral values. The school's self-evaluation document is honest showing a good understanding of strengths and areas for development. A development issue in the last inspection report was to refine and sharpen systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the school as a church school. Staff, spearheaded by the headteacher, have made good progress in this area, gathering pupils' views, reviewing practice and implementing changes. Governors recognise the need for their approach to be more formally organised and recorded. Whilst they know their school well, their progress towards this issue is satisfactory. Links with the local community and church are strong; parents appreciate the efforts made to keep them informed. They do not recall being asked for their views on the school's role as a church school, although they have regular opportunities to reply to questionnaires on other aspects. Good links exist with the Diocese for training and support and pupils have attended Diocesan events such as Candlemas services.

SIAS report February 2011 Guilsborough Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary,
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