



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Saint John the Baptist Church of England Primary School

Hawthorn Bank
Spalding
Lincolnshire
PE11 1JQ

Diocese: Lincoln

Local authority: Lincolnshire
Date of inspection: 24 October 2012
Dates of last inspection: 30 June and 2 July 2008
School's unique reference number: 120613
Headteacher: Mr Paul Reid
Inspector's name and number: Paul Thompson NS 717

School context

This is a larger than average Church Aided school within the market town of Spalding with 426 pupils on roll. Most children are of White British heritage although an increasing number come from a range of ethnic backgrounds with English as an additional language. The parish priest is the chair of governors and the headteacher has been in post for seven years.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Saint John the Baptist Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

This is an outstanding church school with a very caring ethos which is well established upon an Anglican foundation. Christian values are at the heart of the school's mission and underpin the excellent relationships between all members of the school community. The children are confident individuals and achieve well. School leaders provide a very clear vision for the school and have support from all stakeholders to take the school forward.

Established strengths

- The energy, dedication and clear direction provided by the outstanding leadership of the headteacher and the very well informed and supportive governing body.
- The strong community spirit where there is mutual respect and support for one another.
- The outstanding subject leadership of religious education (RE) that has enabled the teaching and learning of major world faiths to be very creative and exciting.
- The wonderful opportunities for spiritual development that exist in collective worship, the curriculum and the environment.

Focus for development

- Systematically promote Christian values through collective worship and the curriculum to provide an explicit focus on how they underpin the excellent relationships in school.
- Develop a sustainable model for routinely involving children in the planning and preparation of collective worship.
- Embed assessment strategies in RE so that children are clear about their next steps in learning and that differentiation of work is linked to RE level descriptors.
- Expand the opportunities for communication and consultation with parents so they feel more informed to support learning in RE and the work on values.

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

This is a very inclusive school where everyone is valued as an individual. The school clearly demonstrates that it is 'A Caring Christian Community Achieving Full Potential For All'. The staff know the children exceptionally well and they are committed to enabling all children to do their best. Children of different abilities and backgrounds enjoy learning and progress well. The Pupil Mentor is highly valued in school for the support she offers families in their home-school lives. Parents say it is a very popular school because the children achieve high standards and it is a 'bonus' that it is a church school. Parents value the close links with the church and enjoy attending the special school services there. One father said that it is a 'good friendly community'. Christian values are clearly at the heart of the school and underpin the excellent relationships that exist between all groups. Love and forgiveness are two main attributes within school. One child said if we do something wrong we must be sorry to be forgiven. Behaviour is excellent in school. In the playground as well as in classrooms, it was clear that children work and play cooperatively and genuinely care for one another. The school plans to promote and celebrate these values from a Christian perspective in a more systematic way through collective worship, the curriculum and the environment. There are many opportunities for spiritual development in school. Children and staff are confident to explore the 'big questions' in life. When Year 3 children were considering the question of 'Did Jesus know he was the son of God?' in RE, there was a reaction of amazement when they watched a video clip of Jesus defending his Father's house. Collective worship is valued as a deeply spiritual occasion providing special times for prayer and reflection. The art work in the corridors and the quiet areas outside also provide inspiration and a setting for children to think about the world and not let it simply pass by. The opportunities for social, moral and cultural development are frequent. The school council and the Friends of School organise many fundraising events for local, national and international charities. The children enjoy the 'Passport Days' which enable them to participate in a range of creative activities related to different cultures. There are number of extra curricular activities such as chess, football and the Church based 'Holy Doughnut' club which broaden and enrich the children's learning experience.

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

Collective worship is an inclusive, affirmative and very special occasion highly valued by everyone in the school community. It is a deeply spiritual occasion providing special times for prayer and reflection and makes an outstanding contribution to the spiritual development of those present. Links with the church community are outstanding as illustrated by the regular involvement of the vicar and his associate minister. On a weekly basis, the vicar leads worship in the parish church with Key Stage 2 children and the Church Army Captain leads worship in school for the younger children. Children express very positive views about the daily act of worship. Two Year 2 children were very keen to explain how they set up the focus table. Parents say they really enjoy the services in church when the whole community can be together. The school and the parochial church council understand how important the church school partnership is for worship and they have plans to remodel the church for the benefit of the whole community. At the recent Harvest festival, there were over 600 people in church to give thanks to God. Regular consultation with parents could also lead to more parents attending school worship on a frequent basis. All staff attend worship and say it provides them with inspiration and a source of comfort. Since the last inspection, a greater number of teachers lead worship. Through regular attendance, the less experienced staff have witnessed good role models and have developed the confidence and ability to lead high quality worship. On the day of inspection, the vicar and the headteacher were observed to jointly lead the collective worship in church. Their close working relationship clearly demonstrates the very strong links that exist between the school and church. Worship was seen to be a happy and inclusive occasion valued and much enjoyed by those present. Children entered the church respectfully and were keen to join in singing the hymns from the church hymn book. The children sang beautifully at the start and end of worship and are clearly very familiar with Anglican patterns of worship. They responded well to the liturgical greeting, the lighting of the candle and the time for prayer and reflection. The children had written their own prayers and were invited to place them on the prayer tree in church. They particularly enjoyed the active reflection which involved valuing the gifts and talents that God has given us. In recent years, the school has focussed on increasing the children's involvement in worship. This development has made a positive impact on the delivery of worship. Children say they really enjoy worship when they have played a significant part in the planning, preparation and delivery. A worship planning group was in operation but this proved difficult to sustain as children and staff move on. The school is keen to develop a more sustainable model where children can routinely plan and prepare worship through class based activities. The systematic promotion of Christian values could be

incorporated into the planning model. The governors and the headteacher effectively monitor and evaluate the impact of collective worship through observation and seeking the views of children, staff and parents.

The effectiveness of religious education is outstanding.

Children of all abilities find RE very engaging and they achieve high standards. In lessons observed, the children were all extremely well behaved and motivated to learn. The lessons are very inclusive and children of different faith backgrounds value them immensely. The children are very respectful to one another and they are able to contribute ideas and opinions sensitively. School leaders have worked closely with some parents from a range of faith backgrounds to ensure they are well informed about lesson content and can make a valuable contribution to their children's learning. Parents have said it would be useful to develop the communication about RE to all parents so that they are better placed to support the school in this core subject. The subject leaders have been given the opportunity to develop the quality of teaching and learning in RE to an outstanding level. In particular, they have provided teachers with the expertise and resources to deliver imaginative, creative and investigative lessons which inspire children. All three lessons observed during the day of inspection demonstrated these qualities. Groups of Year 5 children were keen to investigate Hindu festivals and create spidergrams of information to share with other children. It is evident that RE supports learning in other subjects and vice versa. For example, the enquiry based learning about religion motivates the children to make more use of information technology and digital media. There has been an emphasis on providing the children with first hand experiences and the visits to different places of worship have supported this focus. Lessons are extremely well planned and prepared. They make a significant contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In an outstanding Year 6 lesson about Jewish beliefs, the teacher planned a range of creative activities which encouraged children to reflect upon their personal values and beliefs. Her excellent knowledge of the children and the subject enabled the children to progress and achieve exceptionally well. RE displays are of a high quality as they provide information, provoke thinking and celebrate achievements. Assessment in RE has obviously been a focus for subject leaders since the last inspection. More teachers are tailoring work according to the children's RE ability and marking in books is constructive as well as affirmative. Assessment in RE could be developed further by enabling the children be more aware and involved in identifying their next steps in learning. A greater use of the 'I can' statements would support this aim. In conjunction with subject leaders, the governors play an active role in monitoring and evaluating RE. They visit lessons, look at planning and children's work and meet with children and staff. Their evaluations inform the subject action plans.

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

Leadership at all levels is outstanding. The headteacher is a hardworking, committed and inspirational leader who has the full support of everyone in the school community. The governing body and in particular the members of the church school inspection committee are very proactive in developing the distinctive character of the school. The RE subject leaders are energetic and dynamic in their drive to further improve the profile and quality of teaching and learning in the subject. Together, the school leaders have a clear vision underpinned by Christian values which is supported by all members of the school community. The leaders have proved to have excellent capacity to drive the school forward. In response to the last inspection, they have responded well to all recommendations and have made significant progress in developing collective worship, RE and meeting the needs of all children. The governors have very effective procedures in place for recruiting new staff. They ensure that applicants are clear about the Christian ethos and the expectations of working in a church school. As a result there is a very dedicated and strong team of staff who are wholly supportive of the school's continued development as a church school. Members of staff benefit from a good range of professional development opportunities. They say they enjoy working at the school and greatly value the strong support given by leaders. For school evaluation, the leaders seek the views of range of stakeholders and have an accurate view of their school. It is the children's view that their school is 'exciting'. The school is well placed for a successful future and for the continuation of the children's present experience.