

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Lindley Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Infant School

East Street
Lindley
Huddersfield
HD3 3NE

Diocese: Wakefield

Local authority: Kirklees
Date of inspection: 7 December 2012
Date of last inspection: 15 January 2008
School's unique reference number: 107731
Headteacher: Mrs N. Beaumont
Inspector's name and number: Mr Malcolm Price (627)

School context

Lindley Infant School is a larger than average infant school, situated in a small village on the outskirts of Huddersfield. There are currently 359 pupils from a wide range of social backgrounds, including a proportion from ethnic minorities. The parish church, St Stephen's, is within walking distance. The headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a Church of England school are outstanding.

The Christian character of the school is fundamental to its activities and its daily life. It is demonstrated in the confidence and maturity with which children speak of spiritual matters and relate their actions to school values. Strong leadership and teamwork have created a thriving community, pervaded by positive and caring relationships. Collective worship and religious education (RE) support this distinctiveness and benefit from a rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluation. Standards are high and this is mirrored in children's learning through RE activities. School and church leaders have been effective in building a vibrant partnership.

Established strengths

- The strong Christian character and caring ethos of the school, demonstrated through exemplary relationships
- Strong, supportive links with local churches
- Effective leadership linked to a clear vision for the school's development

Focus areas for development

- Actively seek opportunities to develop and increase children's role in the planning and delivery of collective worship
- Consolidate plans to review, with the whole school community, the school's aims and vision with regard to securing a core set of Christian values

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

Even a brief visit to this welcoming, busy school would leave no doubt that its distinctive Christian character is central to its activities; this is demonstrated in thought-provoking displays and classroom reflection areas, through prayer at key times and through a curriculum that places a priority on children's spiritual development. However, this character is most evident in the ease and readiness with which children speak of spiritual and moral matters – for example, they relate the key points of the Good Samaritan story to the importance of helping others in need, explaining that 'everyone is your neighbour'. This is clearly reflected in mature attitudes and excellent behaviour – children are noticeably generous towards each other and explain that 'if someone says sorry to you, you should forgive them.' All members of the school community support and benefit from its core Christian values – children regularly speak of respect, trust, hope and friendship – and this understanding is borne out in excellent relationships at all levels. Children understand that

they belong to a church school and explain that 'we're attached to the church'; they remember special events in local churches such as harvest and spiritual journeys. Parents are universally supportive of the school and its values, regardless of their own faith standpoint.

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

Collective worship, in a variety of formats, is a key point in each school day and encapsulates the core Christian values. Children are fully engaged and respect this special time – they are encouraged to enter the hall with 'worship hands'. They sing confidently and are sensitive to times of reflection. They are enthusiastic in their praise of others during the award of golden certificates. They understand the particular significance of the advent candles and recognise that a lit candle 'represents Jesus as the light of the world.' There is much evidence that children contribute to special worship times – they are now ready to take a greater and more regular role in planning and leading worship, for example through the planned pupil worship committee. Collective Worship follows a clear, thematic structure across the school year and includes the major Christian festivals and those of other faiths. It is supported by visits from local clergy and church members whose input – for example, through the Open the Book scheme - is remembered by children. Collective worship is exceptionally well monitored - staff, governors and parents are all encouraged to give feedback and children evaluate aspects of worship using child-friendly formats that ask how worship made them feel and what they might wish to change.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding.

Religious education (RE) enjoys a high profile in the school – children are keen to show their work and to talk about what they have learnt. Teachers take every opportunity to present higher level questions – for instance, in a lesson about the nativity, by asking children 'how do you think the shepherds were feeling?' and through prompting children to explain the symbolism of the Christingle. This questioning is a hallmark of RE lessons and encourages children to explain what they learn from religion – children describe how elements of the Christingle 'represent God's creation' and suggest that 'God's love can stretch around the world and find everyone.' All children's contributions are valued, as in a Godly play lesson about the gifts brought by the wise men, and this produces confident responses - 'I would give Jesus a crown to represent him being a King.' Standards of work in RE are excellent and at least in line with those in other subjects. This is evidenced in extensive portfolios of children's work maintained by the RE subject leader, who has also set in place a manageable assessment system to which all teachers contribute. Children speak confidently about a range of faiths and festivals, are confident in their spiritual and moral awareness and reflect on their learning. They are able to consider difficult questions, such as the nature of heaven and why people are disabled.

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

School leaders have been effective in creating a church school environment which has a shared vision and sense of purpose. All leaders, including governors and children, have a clear understanding of what makes the school distinctive. Training events and good practice have been effectively shared within the local church school partnership. School and local church leaders have been proactive in consolidating mutually beneficial links. Self-evaluation is rigorous and meaningful and the school community has begun the important task of revising the school aims – plans have grown to review the core set of Christian values. The pupil voice is highly valued and children are encouraged to take on leadership roles, including through the school council. School leaders have worked hard to develop children's awareness of other faiths and cultures, through visits to a range of places of worship and the interfaith centre, through support for charities and through links with schools both locally and in Nigeria. The school leaders have also promoted global awareness and have successfully gained eco-school, healthy school and investors in pupils awards. All this is having a cohesive effect on the community and an impact on attitudes – for instance, children express their understanding of Christian values in stating that 'it's really important to love God and your neighbours' and that, therefore, Christians should care for 'people who do not have enough food or have no toys'.