

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Lightcliffe Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Wakefield Road
Lightcliffe
Halifax
West Yorkshire
HX3 8SH



Diocese: Wakefield

Local authority: Calderdale

Date of last inspection: 9 April 2008

Headteacher: Charles Woodbridge

Dates of inspection: 7 March 2013

School's unique reference number: 107572

Inspector's name and number: Lorraine Hanson 769

School context

Lightcliffe Church of England School is a larger than average primary school with 421 pupils on roll. The parish church of St Matthew's is near-by and the school serves the community of Lightcliffe and surrounding villages. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is well below the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Lightcliffe Church of England Voluntary Aided School as a Church of England school are good

This is a good church school where pupils are nurtured through the provision of a good quality, inclusive education, which enables them to achieve well and grow to be thoughtful, caring, confident and responsible individuals. The distinctive nature of this school is characterised through the positive, respectful relationships and Christian values which permeate school life.

Established strengths

- The quality of personal and spiritual development of pupils, which is promoted through Christian teaching and inspires the ethos of the school
- The quality of relationships between adults and pupils, that nurtures commitment to those in their school and wider community
- The compassion children demonstrate through their charitable work, including for the link school in Mara, Tanzania
- The strong leadership which embraces change to continue to move the school forward as a church school.

Focus for development

- Involve stakeholders in evaluating the distinctive nature of the school as a church school, to inform future developments
- Formalise and record the evaluation of Collective Worship to identify areas for further development.
- Evaluate RE to identify the impact of the new curriculum and to ensure that assessment outcomes are utilised effectively to progress learning.

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

Pupils achieve well in a school environment that embodies Christian values and principles and is highly supportive of pupils' personal, spiritual and moral development. A parent commented, 'this school helps children develop an understanding of faith, which they take with them into the world.' Pupils are confident to talk about faith. For example one child commented, 'when I pray it makes me feel warm in my heart.' Behaviour of pupils is good and there are very positive, supportive relationships evident throughout the school, characterised by Christian care and concern for others. The curriculum is rich and enhanced by a variety of visits and visitors, such as a visitor to Year 5 who talked about the Egyptian culture. There are areas in school which promote reflection and prayer, including the outdoor quiet area. Links with the church and parish community of St Matthew's are robust, with volunteers supporting activities for pupils. The Christian character of the school together with the strong connection with church and Wakefield's link diocese of Mara, Tanzania makes a significant impact on pupils' understanding of their role in local and global communities. Pupils often initiate

fundraising events, such as the recent sponsored walk (Kilimanjaro Trek) by Year 6 pupils to raise funds for Mara Primary School. A pupil commented, 'we help other people by raising money and praying for them.' Pupils show understanding of the Christian values introduced, so far as half-termly themes in collective worship and are able to apply these to their lives. For example a pupil explained, 'if you have done something wrong, if you admit this to God, he will forgive you and you can start afresh.' The development of the distinctive nature of the school has been included as a priority in whole school planning and clear advances have been made regarding this, including work on the identification of the school's core Christian values. However evaluation of the impact of the distinctive nature of the school has not yet been formalised.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is an important part of the school's daily life and is enjoyed by pupils and staff alike. Worship is Christian in character and staff say they feel included. The themes are chosen which reflect the school's commitment to Christian values. Worship is led by the headteacher, teachers or visitors, including the Vicar of St. Matthews and is set out each week as whole school, key stage or class based. School worship is held in the church at key Christian festivals and junior children attend fortnightly services in church during Lent. This, together with the vicar's regular leadership of school worship, enhances pupils' understanding of the Anglican faith and tradition. Parents enjoy attending school worship in the church and feel included. During the two acts of collective worship observed, the theme for both was the Christian value of Compassion and each was age appropriate and well led. An atmosphere of reverence and calm was created through music. Junior pupils were engaged and listening attentively to Biblical text about the Feeding of the Five Thousand. Pupils were keen to be involved and the junior pupils' singing was a joy to hear. Worship was concluded with prayer, including pupils reciting the school prayer from memory. Pupils confidently talk about worship and one boy said about prayer, 'it makes me feel closer to God.' Another commented, 'prayer is comforting when things are difficult.' Older children have some involvement in planning and leading worship, especially for class based worship, and they sometimes lead worship for younger classes. This helps to develop older pupils' strong sense of responsibility, maturity and commitment to others. A formalised evaluation system is not yet in place for worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Pupils enjoy Religious Education (RE) and staff are working together to implement the Calderdale RE syllabus, which has revitalised the RE curriculum. A wide variety of approaches in RE lessons were observed, including good use of ICT. Learning from religion is progressing, though this is not yet fully embedded. Learning about other religions is enabling pupils to further their understanding and empathy with people from different religions and cultures. Early years pupils made a model of a Hindu Temple and could discuss the features of this. Key Stage 1 pupils recounted, with passion, a recent visit they had made to a Hindu Temple and were able to compare this with the parish church. Formal evaluation of the impact of the new RE curriculum has not yet taken place. Marking of pupils' work is in-line with the school's marking policy and standards in RE are above average and in-line with standards in other core subjects in the school. Pupils make above average progress across each key stage in RE. Regular assessment of RE is now in place, though tracking of individual progress is not yet established. The leaderships of RE is good and there is ambition to continue to improve this area of the curriculum.

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

The vision and leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, are driving the school forward as a church school. The Christian ethos of the school is shared, understood and well supported by all members of the school community. Parents are supportive of the school and fully appreciate the positive impact this has on the lives of their children. One parent commented, 'children learn values, respect and how to treat others fairly at this school.' Governors are keen to promote the links between the school and St Matthews Church which are strong. The links through the church and diocese with the Mara Diocese in Tanzania and Mara Primary School are positive in promoting an understanding of and respect for life and worship of a Christian community in Africa. The deputy headteacher is currently working with governors, staff and pupils to identify the core Christian values for the school and this process has drawn the school together with one purpose and is having a positive impact on pupils.

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