

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Leadenham Church of England Primary School

Main Road
Leadenham
Lincolnshire
LN5 0QB

Diocese: Lincoln

Local authority: Lincolnshire

Date of inspection: 11 September 2012

Date of last inspection: 29 April and 1 May 2008

School's unique reference number: 120604

Headteacher: Mrs Claire Collett

Inspector's name and number: Paul Thompson 717

School context

This is a much smaller than average Church Aided school in the village of Leadenham with 40 pupils on roll. Most children are of White British heritage and an increasing number of children live beyond the village boundaries. A pre-school is also provided under school governance. A new headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection. An honorary priest supports the school until a new incumbent is appointed.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Leadenham Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

The school exudes a very caring ethos which is well established upon an Anglican foundation. Christian values are explicitly demonstrated through the interaction between all members of the school community. The children are happy individuals who support each other and achieve well. The dedicated headteacher and governors provide a very clear vision for the school and have the support from all stakeholders to take the school forward into the future.

Established strengths

- The excellent relationships between all members of the school community which are underpinned by Christian values
- The outstanding collective worship which is well planned, inspiring, affirmative and highly valued by everyone.
- An excellent knowledge of the children which enables valuable opportunities for spiritual development and good teaching and learning in religious education (RE).
- The drive, commitment and clear direction provided by the outstanding leadership of the headteacher and a very well informed and supportive governing body.

Focus for development

- Across the curriculum enable the subject coordinator for RE to plan a greater range of practical and first hand experiences of different religions and cultures.
- To make more use of the eight level 'I can' statements in RE so that the progression of skills within the subject is clear to children as well as to staff.
- Through collaborative partnerships enable staff to develop an increasing range of Christian based activities and experiences for themselves and the children.
- Raise the profile of the school and celebrate its outstanding distinctiveness and effectiveness with the local and wider community through display, the media and website.

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

The school community is very proud of its church Aided status and everyone is truly committed to enabling all children to reach their full potential. In the small and caring

environment, everyone is known well to each other and everyone is highly valued as individuals. A common view of parents is that the school provides the children with a safe, caring and supportive place to learn. One parent noted that it is obvious that the atmosphere is influenced by the church and she summed it up with three key words, 'friendship, fun and family'. A new parent said she was overwhelmed by how quickly her child settled into school and how effective the teachers are at addressing her child's needs. The school promotes Christian values in a variety of ways including collective worship, the curriculum and through its learning environment. The children recognise they learn about values such as trust, honesty and respect through the love of God and the life of Jesus. They articulately describe how they live these values out in school. A Key Stage 2 girl described how she cares for the younger children in the playground. The mutual care and respect is clearly evident in school. Spiritual, moral and social development is a strong feature of the school. Not only does collective worship provide wonderful opportunities for spiritual development but so do the curriculum and the school environment. In all three RE lessons observed, the children were inspired to reflect about special times in their lives. There is a new prayer tree inside school where children can either hang private prayers in sealed envelopes on the branches or they can openly share an achievement or experience with others. One teaching assistant explained how the prayer tree provided a child with the opportunity to express his emotions following a family bereavement. The opportunities for social and moral development are frequent. The children explained how they enjoy the responsibility for planning fundraising events for example. The school acknowledges that the provision for cultural development is less well developed partly due to the school's rural location. There are plans to provide further opportunities to visit places of worship, invite more visitors into school, to develop links with multi-ethnic schools in the UK and to use more digital resources to appreciate religious and cultural diversity. The school provides a good range of extra curricular activities which contribute towards the school's effectiveness as a church school. For example, an art group was formed to produce wonderful murals of the church, school and Jesus. The links between enrichment activities and RE could be further developed. For example the gardening club could make explicit references to God's creation. The school has very good links with the local community. Displays in the corridors show the school's involvement in festivals and local and county shows. Parents are supportive and help arrange school community events such as fetes and coffee mornings. The link with the church is strong. The Bishop's Visitor is very active in school and her support is highly valued by all. During the interregnum, the school has developed a very positive relationship with Reverend Canon Valerie Rampton. She is welcomed into school to lead collective worship on a regular basis and the children have been able to lead services for Christmas, Easter and the end of year in St Swithun's Church. The headteacher writes about school events in the parish magazine, 'Two Villages'. This promotion and celebration of school life in Leadenham could be further developed so that the school's success is known and celebrated in the Diocese and beyond.

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

Collective worship in school is an inspirational, affirmative and inclusive occasion highly valued by everyone in the school community. It makes an outstanding contribution to the spiritual development of those present. The children and staff say they look forward to it everyday. Parents are welcomed into collective worship on a regular basis and one parent commented that she really enjoyed the school services in church. With no hall, the school regularly plans 'parent assemblies' in the village hall or church. During the inspection, the collective worship was held in a classroom. The classroom was very well prepared with the visual focus table at the front and space for the children and staff to comfortably participate in a range of activities. With the calming music on entry, an image of natural beauty on the screen and the lighting of the candle, the ambience was conducive to worship. On this occasion, the headteacher and many children led the worship. The headteacher is an excellent role model for other members of staff involved in leading worship. One child said he loved the fact that the teachers take it in turns to lead worship because they have different ways of engaging the children. The children's involvement in collective worship is outstanding and the quality of their singing is amazing. The children also engaged in discussion, reflection, drama, prayer and reading passages from the Bible and a storybook. It was through these activities the children explored in depth the values of friendship and selflessness from a Christian perspective. The making of the friendship cake imaginatively encouraged the children to think what key ingredients are needed for friendship. A beautiful

blend of humour and seriousness, creativity and imagination, tradition and contemporary, reflection and expression was evident throughout the worship. The children are very familiar with Anglican patterns of worship and there is a conscious effort to replicate church practice. The children realise that the candle signifies that Jesus is the Light of the World, there is a cross prominently displayed, liturgical cloths are used and the Lord's Prayer is said on a regular basis. The monitoring and evaluation of collective worship is mostly informal but effective. By being present in collective worship and talking to a range of stakeholders, the headteacher knows that collective worship is having a positive impact on the school community. The governors commented that it is 'standing room only' at special services and acts of worship. The headteacher is however keen to consider a more focused approach to evaluating aspects of worship such as pupil engagement in specific themes. The school is keen to involve the new incumbent when appointed in the planning and delivery of collective worship.

The effectiveness of religious education is good.

The children enjoy religious education and as in other subjects they achieve well. The children work in small mixed aged classes. Their behaviour in all lessons is excellent. They are very respectful to one another and they are able to contribute ideas and opinions sensitively. Children say they enjoy RE, particularly when they are engaged in active and creative learning. In the majority of the lessons observed, there was a good element of creativity. The younger children particularly enjoyed the drama and story about Moses. This lesson was very well planned and prepared with the children taking on character roles and using meaningful props to bring the story to life. Afterwards, the children were very confident in answering questions about the story. A reflective story based approach called Godly Play was used in a different lesson and this inspired the children to explore the concept of pilgrimage. It was very evident in all three lessons observed that RE makes a significant contribution to spiritual development. In one lesson, the children were reflecting on special places and in response to a picture of a field of flowers, one child spontaneously said, 'I would lie in the flowers and just look up at the blue sky'. RE has a high profile in school and is taught both as a discrete subject and as part of a thematic unit where appropriate. Meaningful links are made with other areas of the curriculum and the unit for this term, 'Religious Journeys' is the key driver for the whole curriculum. This indicates that the school is using its Aided status to place RE at the forefront of its education alongside other core subjects. The school needs to celebrate the emphasis it places on RE through display. There were few displays of RE in the school at the time of inspection. The school acknowledges that it needs to provide more first-hand experiences of major world religions and cultures and this is in the school development plan. The marking of RE work provides children with a balance of praise and challenge. 'Assessment for Learning' strategies are used well. The children are confident to say when they need more support or challenge. A more explicit use of 'I can' statements from the Lincolnshire Agreed syllabus would clarify the pathway to improvement in RE for the children. A greater use of the statements would also lead to more lessons being differentiated by RE skill and ability rather than just Literacy ability. The school recognises that the role of the RE subject leader needs to be developed. The senior teacher has recently taken on this role and with support from the governors there is good capacity to make this subject outstanding.

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

Since the last inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed. She is a committed, hardworking and compassionate leader who has the full support of everyone in the school community. The governing body is very proactive and offers an appropriate degree of challenge and support to school leadership. A good proportion of governors were present during the inspection and they demonstrated an excellent knowledge of the school and had a clear vision based on Christian values. They 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. The interview panel always involves an experienced foundation governor and the recruitment activities are designed to test candidates' ability to work effectively in a Christian school context. Consequently, governors have recruited a very dedicated and strong team of staff who are wholly supporting the

school's development as a church school. Members of staff say they enjoy working at the school and there is good team spirit. A new teacher to the school said the warm welcome and support she has received from the headteacher and staff has been wonderful. The staff are fully involved in school development planning and good professional development takes place. The school particularly takes advantage of any Diocesan courses and conferences. Collaborative partnerships with other local church schools could also enhance professional development opportunities in the future. The school has made excellent progress in all four areas of focus identified at the last inspection. Imaginative work throughout the curriculum is much more evident since the introduction of thematic units. Values are more explicitly promoted from a Christian perspective as seen in collective worship and through discussion with children and parents. The school is making more adventurous use of its Aided status to bring RE to the forefront of the curriculum. School leaders could however further promote the school's 'specialness' in the wider community. The headteacher, staff and governors certainly share the same vision for driving the school forward. They all play a key role in the self evaluation of the school as a church school and together plan future actions for development.

SIAS report September 2012 Leadenham Church of England Primary School, Lincolnshire
PE12 6HU