

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Richard Taylor Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Bilton Lane
Harrogate
North Yorkshire.
HG1 3DT

Diocese: Ripon and Leeds

Local Authority: North Yorkshire
Date of inspection: 13th December 2012
Date of last inspection: 19th November 2007
School's Unique reference number: 121634
Name of Headteacher: Mr Andrew Symonds
Inspector's name: Ms. M. McLean NS 642

School context

Richard Taylor Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is a larger than average primary school serving the north-western side of Harrogate. There are 281 pupils on roll. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is low; the number of children with special educational needs is broadly average; the majority of pupils are of white British origin. Since the last inspection, a new deputy head has been appointed. The school has a number of awards including Investors in Pupils, Sing Up Gold Award and Fair Trade status.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Richard Taylor Voluntary Aided Primary as a Church of England school is outstanding

The Christian character of the school has a major impact on pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Relationships throughout are characterised by care and concern for each other. Parents say that pupils of all faiths and none are affirmed and that the Christian values of the school give children a clear framework by which to live their lives.

Established strengths

- The strong and inspirational Christian leadership of the headteacher supported by a committed staff.
- The friendship and care for each other which characterises the relations between all members of the school community.
- The outstanding relationship between the school and the church which offers support to parents and the wider community.

Focus for development

- Ensure that the Christian values which underpin the school are regularly reviewed by all stakeholders.
- Ensure that the assessment and monitoring of religious education is informed by current best practice.
- Increase opportunities for pupils to plan, lead and evaluate their own collective worship on a regular basis

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

Christian values of hope, compassion and service are implicit in the day-to-day life of the school. There is a strong emphasis on friendship and pupils enjoy adding leaves to their Friendship Tree - 'which blooms even in Winter' - to show how they demonstrate care and concern for each other. Parents say that their children are encouraged to be tolerant and supportive of each individual, whatever their needs. One child commented, 'The classroom is a better place for having [x] in it'.

Parents say that the school's values mean that children leave the school able to set their own rules to live by. Behaviour is exemplary. Children are open, courteous and welcoming. Across the curriculum, there are many opportunities to learn about Christian values through projects such as Water Aid, and Fair Trade. Pupils are encouraged to be responsible citizens through being members of the school council, or as playtime and singing buddies. They are confident that their ideas are taken seriously and acted upon. Children host social events for senior citizens and provide them with hampers at Harvest. There is regular fundraising for a range of charities. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including an outstanding chamber choir. The school environment reflects a commitment to high quality provision. Children are proud of their Peace Garden with its wood seating and sensory planting. 'It's a quiet place to go and think when it gets hectic' observed one pupil, 'and everyone respects it'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is central to the life of the school and is based on a series of planned themes which reflect the church's year. Children say that they particularly enjoy the opportunity to celebrate their successes. Children are confident and enthusiastic in their hymn singing and saying of the school prayer. Members of the clergy regularly lead worship; pupils were keen to recall some of their more exciting artefacts, which included a Bible with flames coming out of it. All children and staff participate in worship; parents who are of other faiths speak positively of the way that the Christian worship affirms and includes their children. Foundation governors now undertake regular monitoring and evaluation of worship; this was an aspect for development identified in the previous inspection. There are close links with St John's Church, where pupils celebrate major festivals and events during the year. Pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity to attend a mid-week Eucharist. In the worship observed, children contributed to an exploration of Christmas Choices - which included an interview with Herod – on Trust, Friendship and Service. Pupils have regular opportunities to lead worship; in the lively Nativity observed, Year 2 pupils had written their own script to re-tell the story. Pupils say they would like more time for their personal prayers and reflection. They would also welcome additional opportunities to plan and lead their own worship on a regular basis; this is identified as an area for development.

The effectiveness of Religious Education is good

Since the last inspection, religious education has been reviewed in line with the diocesan syllabus. Standards in RE are in line with other subjects in the curriculum. RE is planned to offer a range of learning opportunities, including drama and art. Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and are able to relate its teachings to their own experience. They talk confidently about God and regard Big RE as a highlight of the week. The school uses its commitment to Fair Trade and ecology to develop pupils' understanding of global issues and stewardship. This is strengthened by a programme of visits to different places of worship which has recently been established. In the KS2 lesson observed, pupils reflected on the impact of the angels' visit to the shepherds; all were confident and engaged in discussion. Early years pupils explored the importance of Jesus as the greatest Christmas gift, alongside their own responses to the giving and receiving of presents. Their learning was well supported by a committed team of support staff and volunteers. The subject leader for RE works hard to ensure that all staff have a clear understanding of current best practice and that the quality of teaching and learning has a high priority. Monitoring by the governing body is less well developed. This remains a key focus for development.

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

The strong, effective and inspirational leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by his deputy, ensures that Christian values are embedded in the day-to-day life and work of the school. Staff speak of the good teamwork which characterises relationships throughout. Regular reviews of the mission statement highlight the school as a caring Christian community. The school's senior leadership is in the process of exploring the impact of Christian values on the academic achievement of pupils as well as on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Imaginative development of the building has maximised learning spaces. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the leadership of the headteacher and speak positively of the support

that the school offers to families. They praise the good communication between school and home, especially for working parents, and value the provision made for their children. Parents spoke of the impact of Fair Trade on children as 'positive pester power'. The school has recently begun a consultation process to review and articulate more clearly the school's Christian values. Extending this to the wider community is identified as a focus for development. Training and professional development for all staff is encouraged and there is a growing partnership with other church schools to identify good practice and provide training in leadership. The relationship between the school and the church is outstanding. Clergy are regular visitors to the school and there is strong mutual support. Members of the parent prayer group observed that 'children know they are loved by God' and that the school has 'a heart for the poor'.

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