



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

The William de Yaxley Church of England Junior School

Landsdowne road
Yaxley
Peterborough
PE7 3JL

Diocese: Ely

Local authority: Cambridgeshire
Dates of inspection: 29 January 2009
Date of last inspection: March 2005
School's unique reference number: 110849
Headteacher: Mr Graham Cooper
Inspector's name and number: Mrs Marion Betts 220

School context

The William de Yaxley school is a Junior school for pupils 7 to 11 years. It is slightly smaller than most schools. It serves the village of Yaxley. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average and almost all speak English as their first language. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of The William de Yaxley School as a Church of England school are good

The school's Christian character is evident within the school and understood by staff, pupils, governors and parents. Christian values are embedded in school life, and have a strong positive influence on the high quality of staff and pupil relationships and well-being. Pupils are valued as individuals, and flourish in their personal development. The school is consistently evaluating its work and constantly implementing further improvement strategies.

Established strengths

- The very effective leadership of the headteacher and the senior religious education staff member which contributes significantly to the promotion of the distinctive Christian ethos.
- Very good relationships of respect and care within the whole school community.
- The strong partnership between the school and the church.
- The motivating and interesting activities provided within the religious education (RE) curriculum.

Focus for development

- Improve RE assessment procedures by using these to inform future planning and record pupil progress.
- Increase pupil participation in planning and leading Collective Worship.

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

Pupils at William de Yaxley School feel valued and special. They are confident, can communicate well and enjoy their school life, praising the care of the staff who listen to them and encourage their learning. They feel safe in school and appreciate their views being sought and acted upon through the School Council. They enjoy the enrichment activities of the many clubs provided.

Relationships and respect between all staff and children are very good and demonstrate the school's Christian context and the implementation of the mission statement. The school is characterised by good team work, praise used effectively and a sense of positive well-being. Pupils' successes and achievements are regularly celebrated. Pupils behave well and their attitudes to learning are good. All pupils know and understand the procedures to resolve any problems. The pastoral care of the school is good especially the provision for children with a variety of special needs. Pupils appreciate the provision of the Nurture Group as an extra facility for small group activities and its availability to them when needed.

Pupils' personal, spiritual, moral and social development is good. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong, and a strong awareness and concern for the needs of others demonstrated by the buddy scheme. The pupils raise money for local, diocesan and national charities as well as supporting a local special needs child. They contribute to projects to improve the local area such as by litter collections. The school environment encourages pupils' spiritual development well by the prominent and attractive displays, many with a Christian theme, created using pupils' own ideas and work. Outside areas of quiet are distinct from activity areas. The school promotes a warm, welcoming, inclusive and friendly atmosphere.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is important in the life of the school demonstrated by its prominence as the first activity of the school day and the participation of all members of staff and pupils. It has a positive impact on pupils and promotes well their spiritual and moral development. The themes explain Christian values as well as follow the liturgical year.

Collective worship is well planned and always includes singing, teaching, and time for prayer. Visual symbols, some designed by the pupils, are used to aid understanding and mark collective worship as a special part of the school day. Worship is enhanced by visual and dramatic presentation and singing. The songs include Christian based hymns. The school has begun to monitor the impact of worship on the pupils. Governors attend regularly and are informed of evaluations through the Church School working group, whose membership covers representatives from the school, the governors and the church.

Pupils enjoy worship, especially the lively songs, the different activities that take place and when they have a part to play in it. Staff appreciate the opportunities they too are offered during worship for their own spiritual growth. The school plans to involve pupils more with planning and leading worship. Pupils value the opportunities for composing their own prayers. These may be linked to their religious education topics or composed specially and placed on the hall prayer board. Pupils have a very good understanding of the range of purposes and styles of prayer, such as praise, giving thanks, saying sorry, and asking for help.

Worship develops well pupils' understanding of the Anglican faith. The worship experience is broadened by all teachers leading this as well as visitors invited regularly including clergy and the church youth leader. Pupils know the Lord's Prayer and the School Prayer which are sometimes said during worship, and Grace is said at lunchtime. The main Christian festivals such as Harvest and Christmas are celebrated within the church building. Parents and parishioners are invited to join with these.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The experienced RE teacher promotes the importance of this subject by her enthusiasm and by the prominence of the attractive RE displays in classrooms and around the school.

Teaching throughout the school is good and stimulates pupils' interest in the learning by practical and enjoyable activities. Pupils investigate artefacts and regularly undertake visits to the church and other places of worship as well as inviting visitors to contribute to the RE learning.

The standard of work is good and often linked to other areas of the curriculum such as poetry, craft, and information and communication technology (ICT). For example pupils devised a power-point presentation to explain the meaning of the Lord's prayer to others. RE makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. They are encouraged to reflect on the learning and apply it to their own life and experiences.

Most pupils enjoy their RE lessons, especially the practical activities and opportunities given to them to express their own ideas and experiences. They behave well and are engaged and motivated. Pupils have a good understanding of the Christian faith and are knowledgeable about other faith traditions.

RE teaching and learning is monitored by the school leadership and governors. The curriculum is thoroughly planned, well balanced and uses the diocesan recommended Cambridgeshire Agreed Syllabus. Formal assessments are planned for the end of each topic and will be used to record pupils' achievement linked to RE levels of attainment. Work is well marked giving suitable praise and affirmative comments but does not show pupils how they could improve. RE is very well resourced.

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

The headteacher and governors provide very effective leadership which contributes significantly to the Christian vision of the school. The mission statement is understood by the whole school community and pervades daily activities. The church school status is explicit in policies, signs, website, letter headings and prospectus. The church school working group, which consists of governors, church members and senior staff, formally monitor the distinctiveness of the school as a church school. The self-evaluation of the school as a church school is accurate and comprehensive and contains appropriate plans for future developments. Governors have undertaken training to aid them to develop their role. The staff understand, strongly support and implement the school's expectations of their roles in this Christian community and feel very appreciated for their work.

Links with the local church are strong. Clergy and the church youth worker visit regularly and support the school well. A Christian based club takes place weekly. Pupils' work is displayed in the church, and church events advertised by the school.

Links with parents are good. Parents feel welcomed into the school and particularly mention approachability of the staff to listen to and act on their concerns. They also praise the recent improvement in the induction activities for new children. The headteacher holds a regular parents' forum giving parents the opportunity to express their views. The school has effective links with local schools particularly the feeder infant school. The school facilities are offered to the local community such as to the Parents' and Toddlers' group that takes place in the school hall. Pupils visit local residential homes, display their prayers and work in the library and take an active part in community activities.