



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Gonerby Hill Foot Church of England Primary School

Gonerby Hill Foot
Grantham
Lincolnshire
NG31 8HQ

Diocese: Lincoln

Local authority: Lincolnshire
Dates of inspection: 8 July 2011
Date of last inspection: 29 and 30 September 2008
School's unique reference number: 120524
Headteacher: Mr Peter Riches
Inspector's name and number: Fiona Griffiths 705

School context

This school is a larger than average primary school and serves the northern outskirts of Grantham and the Parish of Great Gonerby. The pupils come from mostly white British backgrounds. The proportion of children with learning difficulties is below average. The buildings have recently been developed and there are spacious grounds. The headteacher is due to retire at the end of the summer term 2011.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Gonerby Hill Foot Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

The school is firmly rooted in distinctive Christian values and is extremely effective in the provision it makes for all those within the school community. This is achieved through the strong and committed leadership of the headteacher with support from the governing body. One governor remarked 'this is a haven of love and caring'. Children's personal behaviour and development show that they enjoy learning within a stimulating and safe environment.

Established strengths

- The vision and leadership of the headteacher supported by the whole community.
- The Christian atmosphere of love, care and support which permeates throughout the school.
- The nurturing of the spiritual environment for every aspect of life in school, particularly through collective worship.
- The excellent relationships and value placed on each individual in the school.

Focus for development

- Ensure the outstanding Christian character of the school is maintained through succession planning enabling support from foundation governors at each stage.
- Explore opportunities for providing pupils with some first-hand experience of working with others in the community.
- Realise the planned development of furthering children's experience and understanding of living in a multi-cultural world.

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

The Christian character of the school is clearly identified by the welcoming attitude of the staff and pupils. It is acknowledged and celebrated by the signs and artefacts as you enter the school, the beautiful stained glass window and the displays in the corridors and classrooms. The whole approach of the staff, encouraged through the vision of the headteacher, is that every child matters. The school places great importance on all aspects of each child's personal development and they enjoy learning within a stimulating environment. Children care for each other and work well together, they are confident and secure. They speak of after school clubs which 'care for every personality' and of how the school 'makes you want to do better and tells you when you have done very well'. They acknowledge and understand how the Christian values which the school promotes so well impact on the whole of school life, for example, Friday morning worship focussing on teamwork and celebration of achievements. The pupils enthusiastically take on appropriate responsibilities including being on the school council and older children support younger children as Sports Leaders and at lunch-time play. One child still talks about past Year 6 pupils who supported him at lunch times. All pupils are extremely well catered for through the inclusive nature of the school. Parents talk about a very definite sense of belonging. They value, as do the pupils, links with both St. Sebastian's Church and St. Wulfram's Church worshiping communities and see this as a strength of the school. Parents talk about their children relating to what takes place during collective worship and how they enjoy singing faith songs. There is a well developed curriculum, supported by a range of clubs and enrichment activities which promotes children's outstanding spiritual, moral and social development. The school now needs to offer greater opportunities for the children to meet others within their local community in order that they can establish a meaningful rapport. The school has plans to involve the wider community in the process of establishing links within the United Kingdom which will enable children to gain a greater understanding of other major world faiths and cultures. The school is developing links with the global community and a governor link with a school in Kenya will give a further opportunity to broaden children's cultural development. (Close gap)

The school's environment is used well to contribute to children's spiritual and moral development through the many excellent displays and the outside spaces. Children's awareness and concern for the needs of others is excellent. They help to raise money for the school for charitable causes, in particular for The Passage Day Centre, a local homeless centre. Memorable occasions for the children have been concerned with making cakes for a 'cake, coffee and company' group which meets at St. Sebastian's Church.

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

Worship occupies a place of central importance in the life of the school and this is well illustrated by the daily attendance of all staff. There is an atmosphere of warmth and care. Collective worship usually takes place in the school hall where there is a display with a candle, cross and Bible which creates an effective focal point. The headteacher and pupil worship team carefully plan and evaluate worship times in order that they are memorable and meaningful for all those present. Children write prayers, sing in the school choir and have created the first of many PowerPoint presentations to be used during worship time. The majority of worships are planned around the Christian gospel and around the main themes of the church calendar. The act of worship observed made an outstanding contribution to the children's spiritual development. Children reflected whilst the candle was lit and the choir sang, pictures and photographs focussed their minds on team work, prayers written by the children were read out and one child was wrapped in a blanket to represent the feelings of warmth and love. They showed great interest, were responsive and participated readily. Children speak of the impact of worship on their lives and cherish the opportunity to 'be with their friends when they are talking to God'. Pupils say they enjoy worship and see it as an important part of the day, something that is special to being in a church school. Many of the pupils spoken to could recall a variety of collective worship times, the message behind them and why they remembered them. They spoke of enjoying the weekly services when school and individual achievements are celebrated and shared.

Worship extends from the school hall into all areas of school life. Each classroom has a cross, Bible and a picture of Jesus for children to reflect on when worship takes place in the classroom. Prayer is seen to be an important aspect of daily life in school and children say prayers before lunch and home time. A minority of pupils are withdrawn from worship due to

their faith and the school makes sensitive provision for them. The pupils' understanding of Anglican practice is excellently supported by local church leaders who lead and share in worship times and through school services held in church at special times during the Church calendar. Pupils and parents speak of enjoying the opportunity to visit both St. Sebastian and St. Wulfram's Churches on these occasions. Parents said 'we look forward to the services at St. Wulfram's Church as there is room for us all to attend'.

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

The clear vision and leadership of the headteacher is outstanding and central to the success of the school as a Church school. With the excellent support he receives from members of staff and the governing body, the school is realising this vision. All work closely to successfully monitor and evaluate the work of the school as a Church school and are focussed on meeting the needs of all learners within a Christian context. Christian values now guide all aspects of school development and form a strong feature of school policy and documentation. Collective worship and religious education have a high status within the school and are well led and supported by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. Governors have begun building effective and inclusive recruitment and induction procedures to explain and explore the school's Christian character. Foundation governors are to be more fully involved in supporting this process and are committed to developing their roles. Matters relating to the school as a Church school are prominent in the minutes from governors' meetings. The school enjoys a close and productive relationship with the local Anglican community and are developing their links with the wider community. The local clergy and worship leaders are proactive in promoting the school's vision. They talk with pride about the school and its achievements. Parents speak appreciatively of the school's Christian ethos and the contribution it makes to their children's all round development. The majority of the school community feel that their voices are not only heard but they are encouraged to reflect on 'big questions' and play an active and responsible role in the school. All feel valued and this contributes greatly to the happy and supportive atmosphere among staff. Parents and members of the wider community hold the school in high regard. Parents acknowledge that the school's successful and purposeful family atmosphere is generated and sustained through the school's caring Christian relationships.

The school has sustained its outstanding Christian character since its last inspection. Issues identified in the previous denominational inspection have been successfully achieved and the school's self-evaluation provides a secure base for future development. Links with the two parish churches and the growing local community links have enhanced the development of the school and its contribution to community cohesion.

SIAS report July 2011 Gonerby Hill Foot Church of England Primary School, Gonerby Hill Foot, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 8HQ