National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Bolsover Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School
Horsehead Lane
Bolsover
Derbyshire
S44 6XH
Diocese: Derby
Local authority: Derbyshire
Dates of inspection: 3rd July 2012
Date of last inspection: 26th June 2009
School's unique reference number: 112801
Head teacher: Mrs. R Herbert
Inspector's name and number: John Clapham 775

School context

Bolsover Church of England Junior is an average sized school located to the east of the centre of Bolsover. The majority of pupils are White British. Numbers on roll are currently increasing year on year, and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above that found nationally. There are above average numbers of pupils identified as disabled or with special educational needs. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bolsover Church of England Junior School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

Bolsover Junior School has a distinctive Christian character which permeates all aspects of school life and is underpinned by explicit Christian values and principles. Christian values form the core of school life, and impact positively on everyone within the school community and are strengthened by the vibrant relationship with the church. Each individual is valued, and children make a significant contribution to the daily running of the school. Staff respect pupils and show genuine care which gives the children confidence in them.

Established strengths

- The Christian values and ethos, which underpin the whole life of the school, consistently encourage, nourish and challenge the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all learners.
- The impact of collective worship in inspiring the thinking and day to day actions of the whole school community.
- The strong and mutually supportive partnership between the school, the church and the wider community.

Focus for development

- Establish links with other schools to develop children's understanding of their role in local, national and global communities.
- Explore ways of involving parents in the Christian ethos of the school.
- Involve all stakeholders in feeding monitoring and evaluation of church school distinctiveness into the school improvement planning cycle.

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

Distinctly Christian values and ethos consistently encourage, nourish and challenge the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of the whole school community. One child summed this up when he said, "Our values help us to do the right things and it changes our path for the future". All children have significant opportunity to contribute to the life of the school community. This ranges from running community lunches, fundraising for charities, school ministers with a whole range of roles and responsibilities, farm managers and the church council. This is clearly impacting of the children's confidence and self esteem. One member of staff noted that "the children are happy and confident and feel valued under the umbrella of our values. They know what they believe and respect the values and beliefs of others." This is reinforced by the oversubscribed Values Club that is run by church members. Children from the school are regularly involved in services in the church, both during the

school day and as part of the church calendar. Both school and church benefit enormously from this strong and mutually supportive partnership. The school is in the early stages of developing links with other schools and organisations in order to give the children a clear understanding of their role in local, national and global communities.
The school environment makes a major contribution to the spiritual development of all learners. This is exemplified through clearly focussed reflection areas in each classroom, dedicated outdoor areas for quiet and reflection, values based displays and a central area for prayer and reflection. The school farm, with pigs, chickens and a vegetable garden and the many animals in and around the school building gives children opportunity to care, to calm down, and to reflect. A foundation governor said "this is a place where everyone can feel safe and secure, learn, grow and raise our vision beyond the world around us to God".
Parents are extremely complimentary of the work of the school and confirm that any issues that they raise are addressed effectively because they find staff caring and approachable. A typical comment from a parent was "There is a good community feel and everyone pulls together". Another parent said "They make our children feel special, and I'm glad my children are here". Parents were not as sure about what makes the school distinctive as a church school, although the majority of parents spoken to expressed a desire to be more involved in the Christian life and witness of the school. The school behaviour policy links well with SMSC and, along with the community cohesion policy, has a clear focus on Christian values. The well structured RE curriculum gives pupils opportunity to synthesise, analyse, reflect and show empathy. In the RE lesson observed, children collaborated effectively and were able to reflect on their learning to develop their own understanding and beliefs.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The Church Council, a group of children who regularly meet with foundation governors, church members and the collective worship coordinator, are fully involved in the planning and evaluation of collective worship. Children regularly have opportunity to feed their ideas and questions into the robust planning process. Evaluative comments are collected systematically by the church council after each act of worship. These evaluations are clearly shaping the direction of worship, and children express enthusiasm for it and feel affirmed and included by worship. They have opportunity to submit requests for prayer, and value prayer as an important part of the life of the school. Discussions with pupils exemplified the positive impact that worship is having on their thinking and day to day actions. A pupil noted "when everyone helps each other and treats them fairly, it makes a big difference." In the act of collective worship observed, children approached the time with reverence and respect as well as enthusiasm, and all were included and affirmed. The pupils know the Lord's Prayer and can explain its meaning in their own words. They experience a wide range of worship styles and traditions and clearly understand the key Christian festivals. Many of them are able to relate key messages to their daily lives, and are developing a clear understanding of Christian worship and practice.

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

The head teacher, staff and governors share a clearly articulated vision where distinctively Christian values impact on the attitudes, relationships and aspirations of the whole school community. A typical comment by a member of staff was "our vision is what we are all about, what we learn about ourselves, and the contribution that every individual can make."
Exemplary relationships throughout the school show the key role that Christian values play within the community. Everyone feels valued and all model the school ethos. This is particularly noticeable in the way that the school works with its pupils with special educational needs, fully involving them in the life of the school. The head teacher is very astute in identifying strengths across the staff team, and nurturing and developing potential for church school leadership. Governors are hugely supportive of the school, and have helped foster strong and mutually beneficial relationships between church, school and the wider community. They are taking an increasingly active role in monitoring and evaluation, including spiritual learning walks, pupil interviews and pupil questionnaires for RE and collective worship. Their role, and that of other stakeholders, in using this insight to drive and be an integral part of the school improvement planning process is commendable and provides a good platform for continuing development.