

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Egton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Egton, Whitby,
North Yorkshire.
YO21 1UT

Diocese: York

Local authority: North Yorkshire

Dates of inspection: 1st July 2010

Date of last inspection: 4th October 2006

School's unique reference number: 121610

Headteacher: Mrs E. Orland

Inspector's name and number: The Revd Dr Jason Phillips 598

School context

This is a very small rural church school with thirty two pupils. Children come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. The catchment area of the school includes local villages and outlying areas and so over 80% of pupils travel to school by school bus.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Egton Primary as a Church of England school are outstanding

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of this outstanding school stems from the dedicated Christian vision of the headteacher and governors and their commitment to ensuring that the Christian community of the school is a gift both to its pupils and the surrounding villages. Pupils achieve well at the school and behaviour is exemplary.

Established strengths

- The effective and clear Christian vision and leadership of the headteacher and governors.
- The caring and considerate nature of the pupils that arises from the school's Christian values.
- The strong links between the vicar, church and school.
- The school's Christian impact upon community cohesion.

Focus for development

- In line with the school development plan, revise and update the curriculum for religious education (RE).
- Extend the effectiveness of marking in RE through developing learning conversations and ensuring that pupils have time to reflect upon and to respond to the learning conversations.

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

The mission statement and school practice secure the school's commitment to meeting individual needs within a stimulating and caring environment founded on Christian values and teaching. RE and collective worship hold high status in the curriculum and make a strong contribution to the pupils' spiritual awareness and development. The attractive school environment celebrates the school's Christian foundation and supports spiritual growth. Pupils enjoy visiting the parish church, which is referred to as the third classroom, and this helps pupils feel comfortable and at home there. Behaviour in school is excellent supported by effective behaviour management systems. Relationships throughout the school are excellent and pupils show exemplary and unconditional care and concern for each other. One child commented that, 'the Holy Spirit is a bit like a fire in your heart and keeps you being kind even if others are not kind to you'. As a consequence pupils are proud of their school and say that the teachers are kind and listen to any problems they might have. By their participation in a variety of charitable and community events such as fundraising for the local Life Boats and the Romanian shoe box project, pupils have a growing understanding of the lives and needs of others. Parents and the local community are very supportive of the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The atmosphere created in school is that of a large family worshipping together confirming for pupils the whole community aspects of the activity. As the worship is focussed upon the needs and views of its pupils they are always engaged in worship and affirmed by it. Worship is well planned and thought out. As a result pupils speak readily and positively about the experience and its impact upon themselves. Reception children are particularly positive about collective worship and one child commented that in collective worship they learned

that 'God is always with them to help them'. Other evaluations are undertaken by staff, governors and incumbent helping the school to understand its developmental needs and in ensuring that collective worship is high quality. The regular contributions of the dedicated incumbent and visits to the parish church add to pupils' understanding of the Anglican nature of their school, as does a clear following of the church's year for example in celebrating festivals and saints' days and in the use of liturgical colours to dress the focus table for worship. Key values of the school are emphasized in collective worship which are then developed across the curriculum extending the positive impact of collective worship

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The pupils work hard and enjoy their lessons in religious education because care is taken to make lessons interesting and to relate key concepts to the experiences of the pupils. As a consequence pupils' knowledge of Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism are well developed and they recognize how faith might influence the decisions and lifestyles of believers. The school makes good use of its friends such as a Jewish parent, the local Catholic priest and Abingdon School to extend pupils' knowledge of how people celebrate in different denominations and faiths and how their faith impacts on daily life and customs. As a result much of the pupils' written work demonstrates an increasing level of understanding of the similarities and differences between major faiths. Learning in RE often stimulates the pupils' thinking about the bigger issues of life such as our personal life journey and issues about the global environment. Teachers and visitors willingly respond to the pupils' needs for discussion which extends pupils' thinking and engagement with the issues explored. The best RE enables pupils to relate the themes being explored to their own experience and beliefs. Reflection in RE is a regular experience which helps pupils to develop spiritually. The school tracks spiritual development in RE developing pupils' self awareness and alerting them to the awe and wonder that is so much a part of their experience at this school. RE is frequently part of cross curricular themes such as the recent fair-trade topic which extends the impact of RE and enables pupils to see RE as integral to life and learning. The learning recorded in pupils' books is generally done with care and provides evidence of pride resulting from the significance RE has in the life of the school. There is emerging evidence of good practice in the marking of work in the way which it provides the pupils with information about their progress. However, its effectiveness is limited because opportunities for pupils to have learning conversations and to consider and respond to the marking are few. The subject is well led because the subject leader regularly reviews the planning and evaluates pupils' progress and attainment to secure good standards that are at least comparable to standards in other subject areas. The school has identified that its scheme of work for RE is due for updating. This is to make it even more effective in ensuring that it reflects the diversity of modern Britain and enables pupils always to engage in demanding activities. The school is well placed to ensure these improvements.

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

The headteacher and governors have a compelling vision for this school as an Anglican school and as a result Christian values are central to all they do. Governors are actively involved in self evaluation through regular involvement in the life of school and ensuring that the church school aspect is integral to any observations. The Christian leadership of the headteacher is exceptional. She is highly skilled in drawing in all stakeholders to consider the effectiveness of the school as a church school and to determine future developments. The children have an active and clear part in school evaluation which gives pupils a sense of responsibility for their school and extends their consideration for those in the school community. Parents are clear that they are appropriately consulted and that as a result they feel the school responds well to their views and concerns. Parents are sure that the Christian values of the school have a direct formative impact on pupils' confidence and upon their considerate and caring behaviour both within and beyond the school. The school undertakes well considered staff professional development as a result of self evaluation, for example recent training on using puppets in collective worship. This then has a positive impact on improved provision for pupils. The headteacher and governors are well aware of the school's developmental needs with regard to succession planning and in ensuring the school remains outstanding into the future. The school has a key strength in community cohesion resulting from its clear commitment and its excellent links with the local church and vicar. Together, church, school and vicar, are a much valued Christian presence in the village and beyond. The local benefice has a close association with the school and sees the headteacher as a greatly respected spiritual leader. This is enhanced by the headteacher presenting the vision and developmental needs of the school to the parish church councils of Egton and Grosmont. This helps secure a community wide commitment to the Christian education of its pupils. The school works closely with other local schools which extends pupils' circle of friends preparing them well for transition to the secondary schools. The school has productive links with the diocese drawing professional support from the diocesan education advisers and spiritual and pastoral support from the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of Whitby both of whom having made recent visits to the school. The headteacher also has a role in skilfully mentoring new church school headteachers in the diocese. These links help to secure the school's understanding of itself as a successful and key contributor to the mission of the Diocese of York.

