

Dunnington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Pear Tree Lane,
Dunnington,
York,
YO19 5QG.

Diocese: York

Local authority: York
Date of inspection: 8th March 2013
Date of last inspection: 5th February 2008
School's unique reference number: 121530
Headteacher: Mrs Caroline Hancy
Inspector's name and number: Denise Brogden 486

School context

Dunnington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is an average sized primary school on the outskirts of York. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The school holds the Healthy Schools Award, Artsmark and Quality Mark Awards.

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

Dunnington Church of England Primary School is an outstanding school that reflects its Christian foundation well. Its values and aims are clearly rooted in a strong Christian tradition which is at the heart of the school where children are 'growing and learning together in an environment based on Christian values'. The Christian ethos permeates all of school life and is especially seen in the strong mutual respect between staff and pupils and the responsibility they have for the care of each other. The outstanding care and guidance provided for pupils ensures provision is made for additional, well targeted support contributing to pupil progress.

Established strengths

- The strong support that foundation governors and local clergy provide, ensuring distinctive Christian values are central to every aspect of the school's life.
- Pupil understanding of Christian values and how these values impact positively on pupil behaviour and the care pupils show to each other.
- The school environment, especially the class reflection areas, which contribute strongly to pupils' spiritual development.

Focus for development

- To extend the variety of stakeholders who evaluate collective worship and to effectively use pupil views to develop worship.
- To plan for greater pupil involvement in leading significant aspects of worship.

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

The school is strongly committed to the nurture and care of all its pupils promoted through clear Christian principles. An action from the last SIAS, to explore creative ways to reflect Christian values through the curriculum, has been very well developed. All curriculum areas link to Christian values such as responsibility, care and tolerance and the overarching value of respect. Pupils confidently discuss school values and differentiate between these and the Christian values in school. Children have enormous trust in the adults who support them and recognise the care given by all members of the school community. Peer mediators play a key role in embedding kind and respectful behaviour between pupils. Pupils have considered how to resolve conflict and recognise the importance of forgiveness. Children are encouraged to develop high expectations in all areas of their learning. Academic achievement of all learners is good and standards in RE are in line with other subjects. Pupil behaviour is very good. Pupils expressed the importance of visiting the local church for special events and times of the year which supports their growing knowledge of Christian festivals. Each class in school

has an interactive reflection area and pupils are encouraged to write a thought or prayer linked to the value which is the focus of the half term. Bible quotes on displays help children to understand about wisdom and to reflect on who is wise and why. All pupils are able to identify that they attend a Church of England school, recognising they 'worship Jesus and can reflect quietly in worship'. Religious education (RE) has a high priority in school and RE displays reflect the teaching of world wide religions. Pupils make choices about which charities they want to support which provides pupils with an example of putting faith into action. The role that local clergy and congregation play in their support of the school's Christian ethos is an important one and includes running a 'Searchers' after school club which helps to bring the Bible alive for pupils.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Daily collective worship is important in the life of the school because it provides an affirming experience for pupils, staff and visitors and successfully promotes their spiritual growth. There is a cycle of monitoring of worship in place to further develop the effectiveness of worship, an action from the last inspection. This needs to be extended to ensure regular evaluation by pupils and a system in place for their ideas to be acted upon. A high majority of pupils are very positive about worship, as are parent governors who acknowledge the vicar has brought 'Christianity alive'. Acts of worship aim to be thought provoking and inspirational and these aims are well met with worship themes and values being promoted into the everyday life of school. Some younger pupils would like worship to be a 'little more fun', but older pupils recognise the need for balance of fun with time for reflection. The RE/Collective Worship co-ordinator has worked very hard to successfully link Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) themes and global and citizenship themes to specific Christian values. Children clearly enjoy the opportunities to spend time as a whole school in collective worship with the chance to spend time listening, singing, reflecting and praying. Children willingly volunteer for leadership roles including collective worship monitors. However, children would like more opportunities to plan and lead worship. The worship table is a focal point in school and pupils know they light a candle because 'Jesus is the Light of the World'. Time for stillness and reflection is an important aspect of collective worship. The vicar leads exciting and engaging worship on themes such as wisdom and making right choices. This encourages the children to reflect on the wisest choices including being happy with what God made them to be. Worship is consistently and recognisably Christian, honouring the Anglican tradition. There are very strong and effective links with local churches. Opportunity is provided for children to experience aspects of worship on visits to church at Harvest, Christmas and Easter and the choir sing at the Education Sunday service. Pupils are able to talk about key festivals in the Anglican year.

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

The headteacher, along with a re-structured leadership team provides strong leadership. Governors and staff work in close partnership. Reviewing the mission statement to make it more meaningful to all stakeholders, an action from the last SIAS, has taken place and the Christian vision underpins the life of the school community. All staff and governors have participated in Church School Uniqueness training and this has secured understanding of the distinctiveness of a church school. The ethos of the school is shared, understood and very well supported by all members of the school community. All governors are involved in evaluating the distinctiveness of the school as a church school. Governors and parents are able to highlight the key Christian values which underpin school life. Parents recognise the 'very clear values' and 'whole awareness of God which permeates everything' and the importance of prayer in supporting families and children if going through a difficult time. Good links exist with the wider community, the school has a link with a school in India and pupils are learning about global citizenship and different faiths. Parents comment on how positive pupils are on learning about other faiths. The school welcomes suggestions and contributions from all members of the school community. The Parent School Improvement Panel suggested the inclusion within pupil reports on how well pupils put school and Christian values into action in their learning and this is now reported on. Clearly, at this school, all work to ensure this school is a place where there are happy children and confident learners with respect for each other at the heart of the school.