

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Market Rasen Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Mill Road
Market Rasen
Lincolnshire
LN8 3BL

Diocese: Lincoln

Local authority: Lincolnshire
Dates of inspection: 1 July 2009
Date of last inspection: 13 and 15 June 2006
School's unique reference number: 120577
Headteacher: Mr P Thompson
Inspector's name and number: Robert Fish NS 490

School context

Market Rasen Church of England Primary School is a larger than average primary school. Over the past few years the number of pupils attending the school has risen steadily. Most of the 267 pupils are from White British backgrounds and there is a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The school holds the following awards: Investors in People, Healthy School, Artsmark (gold) and Eco Schools (bronze).

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

This school has managed to build, very effectively, on its distinctive character as a Church of England school. This has been nurtured by the headteacher who leads a school characterised by the desire to support each individual in a safe and stimulating environment. It is a school that bases its mission upon Christian ideals and principles; a school with Christian love at its core, where children know they belong.

Established strengths

- The diligent support and Christian concern the school lavishes on its pupils that helps them reference their education through Christian beliefs and values.
- A collective affirmation through worship that encourages and fortifies individual faith.
- Polite, well-behaved and tolerant pupils whose presence at school contributes significantly to an all-encompassing ethos of care.
- The pride and commitment all members of staff show towards the school's traditions and its future development.

Focus for development

- Incorporate first hand experiences into the curriculum where pupils can gain a more rounded understanding of other major world faiths and cultures.
- Bring together the existing themes in religious education to produce one cohesive and discrete scheme for the school.

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

Market Rasen Church of England Primary School is a school rooted explicitly in Christian values. These values are understood and appreciated by all and are fundamental in creating the bedrock on which the school's Christian character flourishes. There is a strong and compelling culture throughout the school that this is an establishment where the nurturing of spiritual and moral fibre carries equal weight with academic outcomes. This commitment to provide for the inner-self of each child is firmly and actively supported by the governing body. It is reflected in the leadership of the headteacher and senior management team, and

replicated by all members of staff. As a consequence, provision for the care and guidance of all pupils, including those who are most vulnerable, is excellent. Pupils speak unanimously of the great sense of community and ownership they experience in helping the school develop. This creates a genuine feeling that this is a school true to its faith; a school where members of staff are willing and committed; where relationships are relaxed but purposeful and where everyone has a passion 'to be the best'. All pupils say they feel safe and happy and enjoy school. This enjoyment is clearly seen during lessons, when the school comes together for worship, during playtime and in the pupils' enthusiasm for clubs and societies. Outdoor residential visits, to places such as Snowdonia and Norfolk, provide opportunities that develop character and independence and support the school's commitment to healthy living. The vibrancy with which musical ensembles support worship, and the eclectic mix of drum rhythms accompanying brass and woodwind in music lessons produces an inclusive, moving and uplifting experience for both participants and observers. The teaching of religious education is good. Lessons engage all pupils successfully through a careful match of task to competence; lessons that challenge their thinking and provide opportunities for personal expression. The provision for spiritual, moral and social development of all pupils is very good. They are polite and helpful to the staff, to visitors and to their peers. There are many opportunities for pupils to engage in charitable and selfless acts and to show their commitment to supporting local and national endeavours. Parents are fulsome in their praise for the school. When asked to sum up how they thought the school cared for their children, one parent said she could do it in one word, 'fantastic!' The school council is effective in raising issues that benefit the school and currently members are in dialogue with Lincolnshire Highways Department to try and secure a pedestrian barrier to the road outside the school. Pupils are unanimous in the declaration that, 'our school is proud to be a Church of England School'. The partnership with the parish church is significant and this, alongside secure links with other local churches, supports and enriches the Christian principles that the school espouses.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is central to the life of the school. Its well-established weekly pattern provides pupils with a variety of avenues through which to experience and engage in worship. Better monitoring of worship, particularly through the formal surveying of pupils and in response to suggestions from the previous inspection, has led to a more coordinated approach from staff, the vicar and other adults who lead worship on a regular basis. Themes for collective worship are planned over the term and promote spiritual, moral and social values well. As a result of these relevant themes and their stimulating delivery pupils participate freely in worship and with unreserved enthusiasm. The enjoyment they gain from worship is clear in the manner they respond to questions, their praise for the efforts of their peers, and through their uplifting singing. Their pleasure, when singing, is expressed by the smiles on their faces; smiles that indicate they are inwardly reflecting on the meaning of the hymn and that their joy in praise is genuine and heartfelt. Of particular note is the confident manner in which younger pupils lead class worship with minimal supervision from the teacher. In this way even the youngest pupils learn that individual contributions support collective responsibility. They speak of their fondness for their own special places and recognise through this that their local church is a special place for Christians. Pupils know there is a clear distinction between collective worship and assembly. Prayer and reflection are important elements of worship and pupils speak openly and without embarrassment of the value they gain from these times. They are eager to lead prayers and, if appropriate, willing to share their thoughts and reflections with others. A number of parents attend weekly services, particularly those that are led by their child's class, as well as on special occasions

at church, such as Christingle and Easter. Parents value this time alongside their children for the positive and communal start it gives to their day.

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

Religious education (RE) is recognised by the head teacher and the staff as a core subject. The high status accorded to the subject reflects further the school's commitment to its Christian foundation and its desire to place all subjects within a Christian context. The subject is well resourced and managed by an enthusiastic and committed leader who

successfully communicates a passion for religion throughout the school. This, along with regular and informative evaluations of teaching and learning in RE, helps all members of staff feel confident and positive about the subject. They have welcomed the opportunity to play a greater role in the teaching of RE and appreciate the value of its high profile throughout the school. They are wholly committed to the school and give willingly of their time and energy. Individually and collectively they show great pride in developing the school's potential. They make excellent use of the range of local network opportunities to provide mutual support for the development of Christian values. The headteacher's commitment to place Christian values at the heart of the school is the crux to its success. His energetic and concerned leadership is fully supported by all members of staff, and by the governors. This shared vision contributes effectively to the school's success. Planning for RE and collective worship involves themes from the local Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education and commercial schemes that focus on social and emotional aspects of learning. These provide a good basis for teaching and learning though, as yet, the school has not developed a scheme that typifies its individual approach to learning. The school has gone some way to addressing the issue of greater exposure to other major world faiths and cultures through the purchasing of interactive computer programs. These allow pupils to gain some insight into other faith buildings such as temples and mosques but, as yet, there are limited opportunities for pupils to experience these at first hand. The vicar is actively involved in school life in his pastoral role. He leads worship regularly and supports the headteacher and staff unreservedly. Other foundation governors play a spirited role in school life when organising church services, attending worship or assisting teachers develop pupils' experiences and understanding of faith. It is this partnership approach that underpins the life of the school, providing the stable foundation on which the school's commitment to its Christian foundation is built.

SIAS report June 2009 Market Rasen Church of England Primary School, Market Rasen, Lincolnshire, LN8 3BL