



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Rauceby Church of England Primary Academy

Tom Lane
North Rauceby
Sleaford
Lincolnshire
NG34 8QW

Diocese: Lincoln

Local authority: Lincolnshire

Date of inspection: 13 March 2014

Dates of last inspection: 24/25 February 2009

School's unique reference number: 120669

Headteacher: Mr Richard Thomson

Inspector's name and number: Mr Peter Riches NS283

School context

Rauceby Church of England Primary Academy is a rural school with 180 children on roll. The great majority of children are of White British heritage, from a wide variety of backgrounds. The school draws children from a wide geographical area. The school converted to a stand-alone academy in July 2012. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant building programme to enhance the school's facilities.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Rauceby Church of England Primary Academy as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- The strong and committed Christian leadership of the headteacher, supported by a proactive board of directors and hardworking staff underpins the success of the school in meeting its aims as a church school.
- The Christian ethos, which pervades the school, and is wholeheartedly supported by parents, has a significant impact on the positive partnership between the school, the church and the local community.
- This is a school where all members of the school community can flourish, whatever their background and starting point.

Areas to improve

- Enhance spiritual development opportunities through the creation of a reflective garden
- Consider a weekly Key Stage act of worship to more closely focus on the younger and older children's needs
- Broaden and deepen the high level of continuing professional development programme for all staff including directors, to include a focus of its impact on teaching and learning

provision.

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

Children are very proud of their school, enjoy attending, and have a good understanding of the Christian values that underpin all areas of school life. Members of the school council are proud to say that they have a voice in the running of the school, such as the utilisation of play equipment, being play buddies, and suggesting ideas for school development. Staff know the children well, and do their best to help them achieve the most they can from whatever their starting point may be. Because all staff fully embrace the Christian ethos, children benefit from a continuity of experience throughout their time at the school. The school has a traditional but flexible approach to the curriculum, with a focus on high standards. Achievement and levels of attainment significantly exceed national expectations, and children make good progress throughout the school, as acknowledged by the recent Ofsted inspection. The Christian value system within the school not only encourages children to make the most of their own gifts, but encourages them to care for others in an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding. It plays a major part in each individual's social, moral, spiritual and cultural (SMSC) development. This is complemented through the delivery of religious education (RE), which is well co-ordinated and resourced and which makes a significant impact on pupils' SMSC development. The school's Christian character has a high profile throughout the school as shown through displays of Christian values, church visits and mission links with overseas schools. Children's behaviour is excellent, and members of the school council felt that the Christian ethos of the school was important in encouraging tolerance of others. This view was mirrored by staff, directors and parents when commenting on relationships within the school. Visits to places of worship for other faiths such as a synagogue, and events such as Indian experience days encouraged a deeper understanding and respect for diverse communities. In the RE lesson observed, children showed a mature understanding, and asked insightful and thought provoking questions. Initiatives such as the International Schools Award, of which the school has Gold Award status, helps children in their understanding of their place in the world through links with schools in France, China and the USA. Support for good causes such as MacMillan Cancer and the Shoe Box Appeal, together with personal contact through a staff member with an African community project enhances this understanding. A significant building programme has taken place since the previous inspection and now provides a more effective learning environment for children. As part of this development, the community hall, which is used for pre and after school provision, provides a venue for village meetings and helps to cement links with the local community. Spiritual development opportunities will be further enhanced through the realisation of the planned reflective garden where the provision of a prayer wall, water feature and talk area to illustrate the three aspects of The Holy Trinity are incorporated.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship clearly has a central place in the life of the school and makes an outstanding impact on the spiritual development of those present. Although only a small minority of children come from other faith backgrounds, all attend worship and feel fully included.

Children commented that they see collective worship as an important time in the day when important aspects of faith and life are explored. Whilst the quality of worship clearly meets the needs of those present, children suggested that to complement whole school worship they would like to explore the possibility of a weekly key stage act of worship to focus more closely on the different age groups. Plans were in hand to consider this suggestion. The school reflection book used by children to comment upon acts of worship is an effective evaluative tool, and allows children to have a voice in the shaping and leadership of worship. Worship is well resourced and planned. In the act of worship observed, children responded and participated with respectful enthusiasm. Singing was excellent, with children joining in as they entered the hall. The headteacher, assisted by children used the story of the widow's mite together with different sized presents to illustrate the theme of giving and concern for others. Children commented that they felt inspired by acts of worship, and could clearly relate themes to the Christian values of the school. A telling example of the impact of worship was given by parents who observed that their children often implemented church school values through their relationships with others outside school. Engagement by staff and children in worship was deep and meaningful, and directly related to spiritual development through reflection and prayer. All children had something to take away from the act of worship at whatever their level of understanding. The centrality of Christ in the Christian focus of the school was emphasised by all worship leaders, and reinforced through prayers in use in classrooms. This made a significant contribution to children's understanding of the Trinity. The school has an excellent relationship with the parish church and vicar, who leads worship in school regularly. Visits to church are eagerly anticipated by children, and well supported by parents. Clergy involvement, church visits, and effective displays such as one showing the meanings of liturgical colours provide experience of the Anglican tradition. Involvement with the Diocesan and local church schools festivals allows for interaction with the wider church school family. The school is well supported by a proactive and experienced Bishop's Visitor.

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

The headteacher provides outstanding Christian leadership for the school. Together with a well informed and proactive board of directors, and a unified and talented staff, he is the key driver in securing the school's success. There is a clear vision to move the school to its next level of development as a church school from an already high position. This is shown through rigorous self-evaluation, professional reflection and the seeking of the views of stakeholders. It is exemplified through the way in which the Christian character of the school features in the school development plan and the headteacher's reports to directors. Areas for development from the previous inspection have been effectively addressed as can be seen through the children's understanding of the importance of Easter as a Christian festival, and the expressions of enjoyment of, and reflection upon collective worship experienced. All directors, including those appointed by the church, understand the importance of holding the school to account, and are proactive and effective in this regard. They are fully involved in the evaluation of all aspects of school life, particularly those relating to the school's distinctiveness, and how it impacts on the achievement and well-being of children. A recent Vision and Values training day reaffirmed the school's core values which are prominently displayed. Other displays, such as those on Lent and Easter reinforce the school's Christian foundation. Directors are mindful of planning for the future, and on the provision of high quality continuing professional development through the local authority, the Diocese and a range of external providers. This is seen as vital for maintaining the impetus of school development, whilst providing further opportunities for personal and spiritual nurturing. Leadership is effectively delegated, with curriculum leaders having the opportunity to resource teaching areas, including RE, and report back on progress and standards achieved. Staff were seen as excellent role models, implementing the school values in a positive and consistent fashion. Parents expressed the view that a significant number of families chose the school because of its strong Christian ethos, and felt its values played a key role in the development of their children. Parents further

commented that communication was very effective, with the weekly newsletter, up to date website, and availability of the headteacher and staff being most important.

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