

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Grendon Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Main Road
Grendon
Northamptonshire,
NN7 1JW

Diocese: **Peterborough**

Local Authority: **Northamptonshire**

Dates of inspection: **26 March 2013**

Date of last inspection: **30 April 2008**

School's unique reference number: **121975**

Headteacher: **Mr John Wayland**

Inspector's name and number: **Reverend H. Morey Gompertz 507**

School context

This is a smaller than average primary school with 102 pupils of whom 60% come from outside the village. Most pupils are of White British heritage and all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and those who qualify for free school meals is well below the national average.

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

A strong Christian ethos drives this highly successful school. Relationships within the school community are exemplary, characterised by Christian support and encouragement. The unique global curriculum together with the highly creative classroom displays encourage the children's learning while its enriched opportunities for reflection provide outstanding opportunities for the Personal, Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural development of the pupils.

Established strengths

- The commitment and Christian vision of the head teacher supported by an active and informed governing body which works hard for the good of the school.
- The well embedded values programme which impacts upon its life as a church school.
- The high quality and rigour of self evaluation which is driving the school forward.
- The priority given to daily reflection and Christian teaching which has clear impact upon the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.

Focus for development

- Ensure that monitoring and evaluation of collective worship by pupils are more routine and systematic.
- Record and continue development of the global curriculum in order to make it accessible to those wishing to share it.

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

Christian values impact all aspects of this school. The head has a driving passion to provide the pupils with skills which enable lifelong learning, care for others and a desire to make a difference in the world. The global curriculum, worship and RE programmes are bound together and underpinned by strong Christian values. The quality of personal relationships is obvious from the moment one enters the building because the staff provide role models based on Christian principles. Care, encouragement and support for individuals is a top priority with parents praising the way in which the school promotes pupils' self-esteem while also being quick to resolve any problems. Staff, governors, pupils and parents all describe the sense of "feeling hugely supported by the school's Christian ethos." The behaviour of the pupils is excellent and they show a sensitivity when their peers are "feeling sad". The school's values system enables pupils to develop a clear sense of what is right and wrong. Careful tracking and a pupil peer mentoring scheme feed information into the detailed pupil profile shared each term with parents. In this way, any problems can be speedily anticipated or resolved and the needs of individual pupils met. The pupil mentoring system empowers pupils in sharing issues with others and this has a very positive impact on their social and personal development. The school council is effective with older members supporting younger so that the pupils feel that their voice is listened to and, after due persuasion of the leadership team, usually implemented. The school engages in various projects of charitable giving. Pupils are encouraged to develop sensitive awareness of issues of cultures where there is extreme poverty. They take part in a project which fosters their economic, communication and social skills. The teaching of RE is a priority and the curriculum leaders, recognising the ease with which it could be marginalised or contrived within the school's global curriculum, plan carefully to ensure its delivery in the most appropriate way - within the global

curriculum, in a discrete session, in acts of worship, or a whole day event. Pupils' progress and achievement in RE is monitored and targets set so that they speak with understanding of the impact and value of the subject to help them "make important choices". The pupils express great pride in their school being special as a church school and view the vicar as "their friend". The vibrant displays and Christian artefacts in the classrooms stimulate the pupils' curiosity and enthusiasm also enriching their daily times of reflection.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.

There is a detailed collective worship plan formed by governors, staff and pupils. This demonstrates variety and creativity with all staff members feeling empowered to lead using their different talents. This was an issue in the last inspection and the school appreciates the support of the vicar and the Bishop's visitor in encouragement and example. Pupils look forward to worship expressing their enjoyment of the variety of styles in which it is offered and the influence it has upon their lives. They particularly appreciate those times when they form groups for discussion within the worship. They enjoy stories from the Bible and show understanding of the different timescales of those from the Old and New Testaments. They appreciate "the special church words we use" and how the familiarity and repetition helped them to "feel comfortable when we use them again in church". The pupils show understanding of the cycle of the church calendar and seasons which have been introduced in worship. Monitoring survey responses from governors and parents demonstrate that the acts of worship both in school and in church are valued. Evaluation of responses leads to their implementation when they are seen to be helpful. The school works hard to provide pupils with skills which will enrich their experiences of collective worship. These include specialist choral teaching and ability to reflect and use silences. The impact of this is seen in their behaviour and response to the very effective act of collective worship observed. The whole community have been involved in selecting the school values thus giving all a sense of ownership. Pupils take responsibility for preparing the hall, placing the cross, candle and singing bowl (used to signal prayer time) at the front. The size of the room precludes the regular inclusion of parents but the church is often used and then they support the school well. At key Christian festivals parents and folk from the village all participate. In the act of worship observed the pupils joined with enthusiasm as the vicar presided. He told stories from the Old and New Testament which were read by the pupils. Prayers written by the pupils were used and they also joined in saying the Lord's Prayer. Pupils describe how the influence of the Biblical and everyday examples they hear in worship reminds them how to behave. The pupils talked about what they were preparing for the Easter Service the following day and spoke about how they enjoyed acts of worship in church. They write the prayers which are used at lunch times and during the reflection times held throughout the school at the end of the day. The latter sessions enable the pupils to focus their thoughts on issues raised in collective worship as also on those raised in RE or other areas of the curriculum. In the reflection sessions observed pupil's contributions were valued and periods of quiet thought were shared in a manner which suggested that they were a normal part of the day with which they were entirely comfortable. Parents spoke with appreciation about this session adding that they had not initially valued it. Governors too challenged this initiative but the report of monitoring visits showed that all now were convinced of the valuable and unique contribution made to the work of the school as a church school and to the SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural) development of the pupils. While the planning, monitoring and evaluation documentation was evident, this lacked detail and routine responses from the pupils would enable further development.

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

The issues mentioned in the previous inspection have largely been addressed. The school's profile as a church school has been raised and its development, worship and progress have been included in the school improvement plan. The head has worked tirelessly to create a team which support and share his vision of the distinctive church school. He has high levels of expectation and commitment and has, together with the governing body, driven the school forward as a church school. All adults share the vision and are totally committed to providing the best education and this is effective because they form a reflective, questioning and self evaluative team. The school prospectus and website clearly outline its distinctive Christian values as a church school. The regular visits of the Vicar (who is a Foundation governor) and link with the local church enhances the impact of distinctive Christian character of the school. There is a culture of accurate reflective self evaluation and regular visits from the governors to monitor initiatives and challenge innovations. The school is quick to respond and the past three years have seen considerable developments in both curriculum and worship provision. A robust system of monitoring standards in all subjects demonstrates that RE standards match those in the core subjects which are judged by OFSTED to be outstanding. High emphasis is placed upon providing for staff training needs. The leadership team has been extended by the inclusion of Deputy Head and Special needs Co-ordinator both of whom have gained training during the past years. School leaders and governors show great capacity and determination to continue addressing developments as a church school.