



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Stamford St. Gilbert's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Foundry Road
Stamford
Lincolnshire
PE9 2PP

Diocese: Lincoln

Local authority: Lincolnshire
Date of inspection: 25 January 2012
Date of last inspection: 24 February 2009
School's unique reference number: 120543
Headteacher: Mrs Claire Thorley
Inspector's name and number: Mr Peter Riches 283

School context

Stamford St. Gilbert's Church of England Primary School is a large primary school with 315 children on roll. The majority of children are from White British backgrounds. Although most of the children are drawn from the school's locality, a significant minority attend from across and beyond the town. The school has been the recipient of a number of national awards.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Stamford St. Gilbert's Voluntary Controlled Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

This is an outstanding church school that successfully meets the needs of all and where the Christian values of the school shine out through its staff and children. Parents recognise this, and are fulsome in their praise and support. Firm and proactive links with the parish church and community enable the school to have a positive influence beyond its gates.

Established strengths

- High quality collective worship
- An outstanding school ethos
- A well informed, supportive and proactive governing body
- Strong church and community links

Focus for development

- To develop ways in which PSHE can complement and enhance the impact of collective worship
- To develop the school grounds to provide areas for quiet reflection

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

All children thrive within the warm Christian environment which St. Gilbert's so successfully provides. Through the value system the school effectively promotes, all are inspired to be the best they can be, whilst encouraging others to do the same. Members of the school council were enthusiastic in their support for the school values which they knew well. A Year 3 child, discussing tolerance commented that 'although we are a Christian school, we understand the views of others'. Behaviour of children was exemplary. Teaching and support staff work tirelessly to provide for the needs of every child, and each small space within the school has a purpose in this respect. A very good example of the strong links with the parish church is the 'Really Readers' group of volunteers who deliver a reading programme to those children who would most benefit. Parents spoke of their overwhelming support for the school. In particular provision for children with special needs was appreciated, as was the family support offered by the school. The ethos of the school, rooted in a determination to do the best for each and every child was a common theme in discussion, as was the approachability and teamwork of the staff, including the headteacher. Ethnic and other faith groups are small, but the welcome, care and consideration afforded to them were positively commented on. The weekly star assembly and golden work tray celebrate achievement across the ability range, while the 'ticket' system, linked to the behaviour policy allows for children to make choices within the school's value system. Members of the Year 6 'ambassadors' commented that whilst they thoroughly enjoy their time at St. Gilbert's, they felt well prepared to move on to secondary education.

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

Collective worship has a special and central part in the life of the school and makes an outstanding contribution to the spiritual and moral development of those present. Children were wholly engaged in the whole school act of worship observed, and contributed enthusiastically. The theme, link to school value and song, together with illustrations projected on a screen provided children with an effective focus in the hall. The act of worship, on the theme of 'People we look up to' was presented by the headteacher who expertly pitched the message so as to be accessible to all age groups. Children supported the organisation and assisted by a member of staff acted out the drama of David and Goliath to illustrate the theme. A member of the school council commented that the act of worship exemplified the value of determination - 'the more you hold up our school values like determination, the more others will follow'. Singing was excellent in terms of quality and enthusiasm. Reflection time allowed for individuals to consider the key messages. The parish priest brought worship to a close very appropriately with a short summary, prayer and blessing. A high staff presence ensured that key elements of the act of worship could be followed up and reinforced during the day. A collective worship board effectively reinforces the weekly themes together with associated thoughts and ideas. Prayer and reflection form a significant part of worship and the display on The Lord's Prayer, successfully explained its various aspects and offered prayer advice. Regular visits to church take place. These include participation in an annual Eucharistic service and together with the incumbent's regular contribution give a broad experience of the Anglican tradition. Collective worship is effectively evaluated, with importance being placed on the views of children. The religious education (RE) subject leader is formulating plans to further integrate collective worship with PSHE and the school value system. Opportunities to participate in Diocesan training events and conferences are enthusiastically taken up. The children are proud of the school's involvement with the wider church and fondly remembered the visit to the school by the Bishop of Grantham, who conducted an act of worship and opened the new school kitchen.

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

The headteacher provides inspirational leadership, and together with governors, demonstrates a deeply held commitment to take the school to the next level of development thus building on from an already high position. Much had been done to successfully address areas from the previous inspection. Leadership is effectively distributed throughout the school, and there is a collective determination to succeed within the schools stated value system. Staff provide very effective role models. Every care is taken to maximise opportunities for the children, whether it be staff movement or restructuring, or the provision of new classrooms. The headteacher is mindful of the need to develop areas for quiet reflection, and is reviewing the school environment in this respect. All governors, including foundation governors carry out their responsibilities very effectively offering an appropriate balance of challenge and support. There are clear procedures for evaluation of the

impact of initiatives, and the views of all stakeholders, including those of children are actively sought. RE is delivered through the local Agreed Syllabus, and is well resourced. It makes a significant contribution to the development of social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness throughout the school. Strong links with the local church, and the active involvement of the incumbent allows the school to have a positive influence within the community. The Sunday Saints group including a number of school families provided a good bridge between school and church in this respect. Support for charities such as Samaritans Purse and The Children's Society, and curriculum input on other faith festivals provides children with experience of the world beyond their own community.

**SIAS report January 2012 Stamford St. Gilbert's Church of England Primary School
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