

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Husthwaite Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School

Low Street
Husthwaite
North Yorkshire
YO61 4QA

Diocese: York

Local authority: North Yorkshire
Date of inspection: 11th September 2012
Date of last inspection: 18th June 2009
School's unique reference number: 121502
Headteacher: Rebecca Bainbridge
Inspector's name and number: Paul A Bramley 326

School context

Husthwaite Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average size rural primary school with 85 pupils organised into four mixed age classes. It serves the local village and surrounding area. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly below the national average. The number with a disability or special educational need is broadly average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Husthwaite Primary as a Church of England school are good

The collective vision and strong leadership have successfully raised the profile of the Christian character of the school. Christian values are at the heart of all they do; they can be seen in documentation, in actions, and are evident in the impact on both the community and children's lives and progress. Children enjoy this school, and parents are proud for their children to attend.

Established strengths

- The positive impact of the distinctive nature of the school on the wider community.
- The clear vision from all leading the school as to how this school is developing as a good Church of England Primary School.
- The good monitoring and evaluation processes in place, enabling Governors to play a significant role in the process.
- The close and constantly developing links with the local Church and community.

Focuses for development

- For all staff to develop opportunities within the curriculum and collective worship to make more explicit the Christian values of the school to its learners and the wider community.
- Use the information gained from monitoring visits and activities to inform future development planning with regard to Husthwaite as an Anglican school.

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

A caring and family atmosphere pervades through every aspect of Husthwaite's work as a school, impacting positively on children, staff and the wider community. One parent described how the school, through its actions, had made her feel 'part of the community at last'. Good relationships are enjoyed by all, with Christian values promoted at every opportunity. For example, with the prospectus, and through displays that are visible immediately one enters the school. The school is striving hard to improve progress, with tracking and assessment measures noted by a recent Ofsted report to be improving. Staff care passionately about the children, this being very evident in discussions within classes and in

collective worship. Children were well supported, being given time to answer questions and to reflect. Such care and focus on values has impacted at home with many parents/carers talking about the deep questions children ask following a religious education (R.E.) lesson, or an act of collective worship. 'I often feel unqualified to answer, they are so deep', said one. The school is seen by its community as being inclusive, with positive examples of how new children are inducted being quoted by children and parents alike. One parent spoke of the extreme care and devotion that was attached to her child who has special educational needs, and how this has helped her to adjust and thrive in school life. She quoted the school sport's day, when 'the whole school clapped and cheered as my daughter finished the race'. The school is also distinctive through many aspects of its life, particularly through its good links with the local Church community. The challenge for governors and staff is to continue to develop such high quality links when a new incumbent is appointed.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is a key part of the school's life and is supported by a well planned and coordinated programme of activities. The school's links with the church itself are strong, with the Vicar having played a major role until his recent departure. Husthwaite benefits from good links with the local Methodist Church. Visits by ministers from both churches have become a regular part of children's lives. Visits to the local church are frequent, with children sharing numerous examples of exciting and memorable visits. The acting of the Easter story in the graveyard by community members will remain long in the children's memories. 'It really brought it to life' stated one child. 'Going to church is something the children look forward to and don't fear' said one governor. Children participate well in the worship itself. They help with planning, preparing music and prayers. Governors are included in a detailed monitoring process. In the worship observed numerous children took part, with all being extremely well engaged. They sang, prayed and contributed with enthusiasm. A table with artefacts, candle, Bible, helped to support the quiet spiritual atmosphere of the experience. However, opportunities to make explicit the link between Christian values and the theme of the worship could be developed further. Worship at the school does have a good impact on the wider community with parents/carers stating how children often related stories heard at school when at home. One parent told how his child had started 'to pray', another how his child wanted 'to hear Bible stories at bedtime rather than fiction'. Reflection areas have this year been introduced into each classroom, offering a good opportunity for children to reflect and pray. One child spoke of 'enjoying the chance to speak to God'; another said how she 'simply liked the quiet time to think'.

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

The headteacher and governors have worked extremely hard to ensure that all of the previous inspection areas for development have now been met in full. Together they share a very clear vision as to how distinctive Christian values are central to every aspect of school life. 'The values permeate through everything we do, they are part of our family life as a school' stated one governor. Governors are involved in monitoring and evaluation, resulting in them having a good understanding of life in the school, especially the impact their focus on Christian values is having on children and the wider community. The school's self-assessment is extremely accurate, with leaders having targeted future developments, including staff visits to other schools to share practice and ideas. Governors have received Diocesan training and been involved in school self evaluation exercises, and so have contributed significantly to the development of Husthwaite as a church school. For example, within their own Strategic Plan, they have a target relating to the development of the Christian ethos of the school. Though monitoring activities are good, more could be done with the information obtained from such activities to influence the future development of the school as an Anglican school. This is something recognised by leaders. The headteacher and a senior member of staff provide strong leadership for the development of R.E. and Collective Worship across the school. They have introduced the 'six apples' theme relating to Christian values, and ensured that all staff, children and parents/carers are aware of their mission and purpose through these highly visible values, placing them at every opportunity around the environment in pictorial fashion e.g. labels on doors. As a result children talk confidently about respect, challenge, caring etc. being able to relate lessons and collective worship sessions with a good depth of understanding. One child spoke of how they had 'huddled together like penguins' demonstrating how 'like Jesus did, we all need to care for each other'.