

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

York St Oswald's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Heslington Lane
Fulford
York
YO10 4LX

Diocese: York

Local authority: York
Date of inspection: 13 July 2012
Date of last inspection: 8 June 2009
School's unique reference number: 121535
Headteacher: Mr Rupert Griffiths
Inspector's name and number: Mrs Lizzie McWhirter MA 244

School context

York St Oswald's Primary School serves the Fulford area of York. This includes families from the Imphal Barracks which is in the parish of St Oswald's. Its 290 pupils are mainly from a White British background. The headteacher has been in post since 2008.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of York St Oswald's as a Church of England school are good

This is a good church school where the whole community is valued and involved and pupils are encouraged to strive for and achieve their best. It is a place of learning where there is a real sense of belonging. All are given the opportunities and experiences to support their Christian journey.

Established strengths

- The strong sense of community which exists.
- The positive attitude of the pupils to each other, life and learning.
- The opportunities given to pupils in collective worship, which supports their spiritual development.

Focus for development

- Involve pupils and governors in the evaluation of collective worship.
- Put in place a systematic method for governors to monitor church school distinctiveness.
- Engage pupils in the development of spaces for reflection, both inside and outside the school.

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

York St Oswald's is an inclusive, cohesive community which is much loved by its pupils and much appreciated by its parent body. Pupils speak highly of their teachers and friends and have very positive attitudes to each other, life and learning. Relationships are good in this church school where values are important. Families from the nearby barracks feel supported and included. Parents are supportive of this school, praising 'the way in which the children interact with each other like a big family'. Parents feel the school 'really embraces diversity because we have the barracks and the university and it is acceptable for children to be friends with children of different religions'. Pupils say they are encouraged to care for each other, celebrating attributes weekly on leaves attached to The Caring Tree, such as 'being a true friend and always being there'. They feel they all belong and 'no one is more special than anyone else'. They acknowledge they are all supported in 'preparing for the future and moving on to other schools'. Some pupils aspire to be teachers, inspired by the role models they see. School fundraising enables the pupils to experience the Christian values of service

and gratitude. Through collective worship and religious education [RE], pupils understand they belong to a church school where they feel secure and where Christian values are promoted. Pupils understand that 'praying is common to all faiths' and respect the difference between religions, valuing learning about different beliefs and their own. They appreciate the different way in which Christians and Muslims pray. Bright, prominent displays around school as well as the opportunity to use the school building, such as the performing arts room, also enhances pupils' spiritual development. The Dyslexia Centre on site enables pupils to become integrated into school life. Pupils are keen to be more involved in the planning and development of reflection areas, both inside and outside the classroom.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship enjoys a special place in this church school where links with the parish church of St Oswald ensure the Anglican tradition is upheld. Worship engages pupils and is making a real difference in their lives. Pupils value worship when they can be 'quiet and reflect more'. They appreciate worship outdoors 'thanking God for the earth'. They enjoy fortnightly worship in school led by the vicar, who is also the Rural Dean, as 'he's fun and cracks religious jokes', enabling them to remember Christian teaching and supporting their learning. Pupils are able to make connections between Bible stories and real life. A good example is the story of Jonah which reminds them to 'forgive people and give them a second chance'. Pupils recognise the importance of forgiveness when praying The Lord's Prayer. They speak highly of the recent Prayer Day led by Orison and YoYo Trust when they had the opportunity to experience the bubble zone and prayer zone. Pupils welcome 'having their own bubble zone somewhere in the school', giving them a space to reflect. Major Christian festivals throughout the year are celebrated in St Oswald's Church. Pupils experience being part of the wider Anglican communion when they sing in York Minster which can be 'scary but fun as other people are with you'. Pupils are keen to contribute their own thoughts and reflections for governors and others to read, and value the opportunity to 'tell people this is what I think about worship'; thus enabling worship to continually improve in integrity, quality and style. Teams of staff and pupils have the opportunity to plan, and be involved in, worship. Governors too recognise the need to evaluate worship, involving pupils. In all these ways, the profile of worship is being raised, supporting pupils' spiritual development.

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

Building on the foundations already in place, the headteacher, together with clergy, foundation governors and staff, share a developing vision for the whole school community. Everyone models the Christian ethos. Foundation governors are addressing areas from the last inspection and seek to make a difference through their active involvement in the life of the school. Some foundation governors and the vicar are relatively new in post. They are open to new ways of taking the school forward, especially in their monitoring role. The school has identified clear areas for development and governors acknowledge that there is work to be done. There is renewed impetus to take this forward. However, this is not yet fully realised. Parents find staff approachable. The school features in 'Church and People', the parish magazine. There are plans for the pupils to write for this publication as well as have the opportunity to display their work in church. There are some very positive examples of church, school and community working together. These include pupils serving refreshments at The Village Café, held in St Oswald's Church, pupils singing to the elderly residents and members of the parish community taking on the role of Reading Guardians, supporting pupils in school. The school welcomes support from the diocese in terms of training for staff and governors so everyone is involved and consulted in upholding the Church of England foundation of this school.