

Kirk Hammerton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School,
St John's Grove
Kirk Hammerton
YO28 8DE

Diocese: Ripon and Leeds

Local Authority: North Yorkshire
Dates of inspection: 18 April 2012
Date of last inspection: 12 June 2009
School's unique reference number: 121572
Headteacher: Miss Emma Miller
Inspector's name and number: Mrs Glenys Vere 463

School context

Kirk Hammerton is a small village primary school situated between Harrogate and York. Pupils are mainly white British and the number with learning difficulties is below the national average. There are 43 pupils on roll, drawn from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. Pupils are taught in mixed age classes. Since the last inspection, the school has had two acting headteachers until, at the beginning of this academic year, an executive headteacher was appointed with oversight of Kirk Hammerton and another primary school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Kirk Hammerton as a Church of England school are good

The headteacher and staff are strongly committed to ensuring that pupils feel secure, loved and valued in all aspects of school life. Within an ethos of Christian inclusiveness, the leadership and management are effectively moving the school forward, despite the many changes in the leadership team in the last year. Against this background, the school's established strengths, highlighted in the previous inspection, are being sustained and the areas of development are being addressed.

Established strengths

- Very effective care, nurture and support for pupils within a Christian context
- Close mutually supportive links with church and community
- Outstanding behaviour of pupils and their extremely positive attitudes to all areas of school life

Focus for development

- Embed the system, already in place, for school leaders to monitor and evaluate progress as a church school
- Implement plans to increase opportunities for pupils to explore cultural diversity at national and global level
- Include pupils in planning, evaluating and leading collective worship

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

This inclusive school is committed to promoting Christian values within a climate of mutual care. Individual needs are recognised and nurtured whilst self-esteem and confidence are developed by teachers' encouragement and support. The school's pastoral emphasis enables pupils' spiritual and moral development to prosper, impacting on progress in their personal growth. Thoughtful writing around the school in books and displays indicates pupils' reflective skills. Responding to class work on a WW2 concentration camp, one child writes, 'It makes me feel so sad.' Reflecting on Judas and Jesus at the Last Supper, another writes, 'He knows it's me. I think I should leave.' There are quiet places in and around the school where pupils can think and reflect on matters that concern them. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' behaviour which is exemplary, especially in class. Progress in learning throughout the school is broadly in line with national averages. The quality of

relationships is extremely positive and respectful. Pupils believe that the Christian character of the school helps them 'to want to look after one another', particularly older pupils caring for younger ones. One comments, 'It's not a school - it's a family'. Pupils express well-considered opinions on a range of topics, whilst also being polite and courteous to one another. Minutes from School Council meetings and information from pupil surveys on a variety of issues, enable the school to be aware of pupils' views and respond to them. Extra-curricular activities relating to music, art and sport cater for pupils' needs and interests, as does a very popular 'Out of School Club'. Pupils' understanding of their role in the community is being addressed with reciprocally supportive church and village links and cluster group ventures (e.g. Olympic Pentathlon). Joint activities with the partnership school, including a residential visit, have enabled pupils to share experiences and become more socially aware. A range of faiths and cultures has been explored through RE, the 'Culture Shock' initiative (involving KS2), visitors to school and visits to different places of worship. A thought-provoking, interactive display on Judaism (in the context of WW 2) and studies of the Chinese New Year and Japanese art have helped to create a stimulating learning environment. Under the new leadership, a link with a contrasting school is expected to be resumed at an early date, to extend pupils' growing awareness of national diversity. The school's Christian distinctiveness is visually demonstrated by, for instance, a cross in the entrance, KS1 'Prayer Leaves' and a display on 'Christian Values'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is an important feature of school life. It impacts effectively on the whole school community through sharing and reflection. Planning is based on key Christian values which the school promotes. All staff are involved in leading worship. In an outstanding act of worship on the theme of 'Going for Goals', some pupils were challenged to attempt various targets, supported by the whole school. All pupils were fully engaged within an atmosphere of calm, respect and sensitivity. Prayer, music and silence afforded opportunities for the enrichment of pupils' spirituality. Governors, including foundation governors, attend collective worship regularly, reporting termly to a sub-committee and then to the full governing body in order to inform planning and secure improvement. Parents evaluate worship by means of the Book of Comments while pupils respond on 'post-it notes'. Policy and processes for monitoring and evaluating worship have been reviewed recently. All staff and governors have accessed diocesan training in worship and are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. Worship is led weekly by the vicar who provides pastoral support to staff, pupils and their families. The relationship between school and church is enhanced by joint services in church. Worship is well supported by parents, church and community, especially the weekly 'sharing worship' and an outdoor Remembrance Day service. Pupils' familiarity with the church, as a place of worship, is strengthened by visits for RE and History studies. At present, pupils do not participate in planning worship or leading it, though they speak with confidence and understanding about Christian festivals, Bible stories and events in the Church's year. One pupil says, 'Worship helps me to think more about caring for others'.

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

The headteacher articulates very effectively a Christian school vision which is fully supported by staff and governors and, subsequently, shared with parents and pupils. School evaluation is thoroughly undertaken by consulting every group in the school community and then fed into the school development plan to achieve further improvement in teaching and learning. Since the last inspection, relevant diocesan training has been accessed by staff and foundation governors to develop further their understanding of the distinctive aspects of a church school, as indicated in the last report. As a result, the leadership team and governors are confirming and strengthening their role, with strategies already in place to reinforce the school's Christian distinctiveness. Articles for the church magazine, contributions to the parish council website and contacts with PCC and church members, through the vicar and governors, assist pupils to flourish as young citizens. Parents feel that they are fully consulted about their children's education and cannot praise the school highly enough for the manner in which their views are taken into account. They describe the headteacher as energetic, visible and approachable and they appreciate the promptness with which issues are tackled. Parents comment, 'The school lives up to and exceeds all our expectations', and 'It provides a valued Christian context for our children's education'.