

Horsley Cof E (VC) Primary School

Church Street,
Horsley,
Derbyshire
DE21 5BR

Diocese: Derby

Local authority: Derbyshire

Dates of inspection: 24 September 2007

Date of last inspection: May 2002

School's unique reference number:112830

Headteacher: Mr Paul Leeson

Inspector's name and number: Rosemary Wibberley 312

School context

Horsley C.of E. Primary School is a smaller than average primary school of 75 pupils. The school takes pupils from a wider catchment area than the village. There are few children from minority ethnic backgrounds.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Horsley Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

Horsley Primary School is a good Church school with the capacity to be outstanding. Christian values permeate all the schools work. Relationships are excellent and all staff and children feel valued.

Established strengths

- The vision of the Head teacher, staff and governors which drives the school forward.
- The caring, Christian environment where excellent relationships are developed.
- The commitment of all staff and governors to educate the whole child.

Focus for development

- To evaluate the impact upon the children of the new initiatives in collective worship.
- To explore a greater range of creative approaches to collective worship.

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

The school ethos is underpinned by Christian values. Signs and symbols around the extremely well kept building welcome visitors to this Church of England Primary School. Children come into school confidently in the morning with their parents and converse easily with their peers and adults.

Parents are aware of the school's church status and some have made a positive choice for a church school for their children.

There is a commitment to the whole child through displays promoting self esteem and the way in which staff speak to children and each other. The very youngest children in Reception and Year 1 are encouraged to be independent and activities are planned in their outdoor area to foster spirituality, collaboration and cooperation. Children were observed working and playing together in both quiet areas and role play areas. Teaching assistants help those children who need support in a quiet, unobtrusive way.

Children's cultural development is fostered by a well planned, rolling scheme of work for RE. Displays in the hall showed work studying other religions as well as Christianity.

The school council leads a weekly reward assembly and have been given other responsibilities such as spending the proceeds of the 'Lapathon';!.

Spirituality is an area being developed with time for reflection in Collective worship and a reflection station for use at other times. RE teaching has an impact on spiritual development.

Year 3/4 children felt that a lesson about Jesus' life 'helps us to be kind and helpful'. RE and PHSE are closely linked and in follow-on lesson children were then encouraged to look at how the example of Jesus and Zacchaeus could be applied in their own lives. Behaviour around school is excellent and older children are keen to help younger children. All adults in school, including the lunchtime supervisor and play worker encourage children positively. Older children are given responsibilities such as Collective worship monitors and lunchtime monitors. Church and School work well together and support each other. The school council raised money towards the new church roof and the church use the school for services whilst the roof is being repaired.

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

The hall is prepared for collective worship by some of the oldest children and children gather sensibly and quietly. They join in with singing and prayer and behave well. Staff take turns to lead collective worship and all are usually present throughout. Themes are planned well in advance using mainly stories as a focus. The current theme being "Families" -most children listened well to the story of Esau's birthright and some were able to answer questions about how they would have felt. Children were used to act out the story. The implications of the story for ourselves now could have been explored more.

A focus table, the use of music and a candle have recently been introduced following discussions between the Head teacher and collective worship coordinator to enhance the collective worship experience. The vicar and church wardens lead worship in school and at church for special occasions such as Christingle or Bible Sunday when Year 5 are given Bibles to use in school.

Some children can speak about Collective worship as being an opportunity to 'help you think' or "to get everyone together" but most children have not yet begun to think about why they have collective worship or what difference it makes to them.

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

The head teacher and governors articulate their vision of the school in their brochure as a good school working within the community and 'acknowledging their Christian foundation' by 'developing appreciation and care for the world' and 'valuing individuality whilst ensuring equal opportunity'. The newly appointed, very enthusiastic RE and collective worship coordinator has initiated new developments within collective worship and RE to increase opportunities for spirituality and reflection. She acknowledges the need to review the new practices introduced and was very positive about the Christian welcome she had received from everyone involved with the school.

Parents speak positively of the school and talk about the 'whole atmosphere' of the school being good. Some had chosen the school because it was a Church school and others because it was a "good" school but they enjoyed the connection with the church and thought it enhanced their children's experience. Staff talk positively of the support from the head, governors and vicar both professionally and personally.

Foundation and other governors support the school well. They are knowledgeable and involved – whether it be setting up links with a school in Nairobi, reporting back to the PCC or organising displays from school in the church. They are all committed to the school and ensure the Church presence when the vicar is with his other parishes.

Governors and staff were involved in the development plan for RE and collective worship. They have all assessed the strengths of the school together and understand the areas of development. They have planned to evaluate the new ideas for collective worship at the beginning of next term. The Foundation Governors have accessed training with the diocese and were keen to learn more about the inspection process. The leadership know their school well and have shared vision for moving forward.