

Inspection report

Fletewood School

Independent school

DfES ref no: 879/6001

Inspection under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002

Dates of inspection:

20 – 23 November 2006

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Fletewood School was founded in 1919. It is a Christian school for boys and girls from three to eleven years. It occupies part of a Seventh Day Adventist Church building in Plymouth and is in part financially supported by the church. There are currently 51 pupils on roll, 6 of whom are part-time. There are 11 pupils in receipt of nursery funding and 11 for whom English is not their first language.

The school aims to *'encourage children to develop strength of character and gain a desire for life-long learning'*.... and is *'dedicated to the discovery of excellence in each child'*.

Summary of main findings

Fletewood School is a small family school which has achieved considerable success in its aim of *'discovering the excellence in each child'*. The pupils feel highly valued as individuals. They respond to the kind and caring staff, who prepare them well for the next stage of their education. As a result of a good curriculum and focused teaching which is encompassed by clear moral guidelines, pupils make good progress. Much of this success is due to the dedication and hard work of the longstanding head teacher and his wife, who also teaches at the school.

What the school does well:

- it encourages pupils to behave in an exemplary way and to develop self-discipline and positive attitudes to learning;
- it gives the younger pupils a 'flying start' to their education;
- it helps to prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education; and
- it is very caring and supportive of each individual pupil.

What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations:

- attend to the training issue in section three of this report.

Next Steps

Whilst not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- streamline the current assessment procedures into a more consistent system and use the information gained to identify more clearly pupils' progress; and
- extend staff training opportunities.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

1. The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

The school provides a good curriculum for its pupils. It offers a broad range of subjects in line with the most recent national guidance and ensures that there is a good balance in the time allocated to each subject. The curriculum supports pupils well in their academic, physical and personal development. A significant emphasis is placed on the development of literacy and numeracy skills and good attention is given to embedding secure skills in information and communication technology (ICT) using up-to-date equipment.

Within a two-year cycle, the school makes effective use of national documentation to prepare thorough half-term plans. From these, teachers produce detailed weekly plans which set out what pupils are expected to learn in each area of the curriculum. The work set in each lesson is generally appropriately matched to pupils' ages and their prior learning. This enables pupils to progress well as they move through the school.

The curriculum for younger pupils in the Foundation Stage is good. They benefit from being taught a lively and imaginative curriculum which reflects fully the expected areas of learning. As a result of the good provision, pupils are well prepared for entry to Year 1.

Satisfactory provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. The school has regard to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice and has a detailed policy to guide staff as to procedures. The small numbers in each class enable teachers, guided by individual education plans, to provide careful support for pupils with specific needs and, as a result, these pupils make steady progress.

A programme of extra-curricular activities further enhances the curriculum, and is good for the small size of the school. This includes some visits out of school together with an annual residential visit for the older pupils and a number of lunchtime and after-school clubs. More than half the pupils, for example, take part in the fencing club, in which sport the school has a creditable record of success in competitions.

The school makes particularly good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and this is a key strength. These aspects of the curriculum are covered very thoroughly in specific life-skills lessons, through assemblies and by permeating many aspects of the teaching of other subjects, principally religious education (RE) and science. Pupils are well aware of the dangers of drugs and of the need for healthy lifestyles. Sex education is covered through the science curriculum, while

the school focuses strongly on the importance of positive relationships in all aspects of its work.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching is consistently good. The teachers are well informed and some are very experienced. They plan their lessons carefully and put considerable effort into achieving their goal of helping all pupils reach their full potential. The school's main strength lies in the excellent relationships fostered within it. It is a happy, friendly place where pupils are carefully nurtured. They report that they are happy and '*love the school*'.

The atmosphere in class is disciplined without being oppressive. Pupils know that they are in school to work hard and behave well and they respond by having high expectations of themselves and put much effort into their work. This is particularly evident in the older pupils' class, where pupils are currently running 'The System', where they are 'paid' for work, set up their own bank accounts with a 'manager', apply for 'jobs' in the class and, during the inspection week, 'bought and sold' houses acquiring a 'mortgage'. This helps to increase their self-confidence, introduces them to the wider world outside school and prepares them well for the next stage of their education.

Teachers set a good pace to lessons, engaging the pupils' attention and helping them to increase their knowledge, understanding and skills. The experienced staff in particular, respond intuitively to the different needs of the pupils. All staff know the pupils' strengths and weaknesses and give them very good individual support. Teachers make effective use of resources, which are sufficient, especially the ICT provision. There is a positive working atmosphere in lessons, with pupils settling willingly to the task in hand. They interact well with each other, working in pairs or small groups, cooperating and discussing their work purposefully. Staff are very good at continually checking pupils' learning within lessons and they mark their work regularly. The school day runs smoothly with a purposeful, yet relaxed atmosphere, conducive to learning. Pupils learn in a working environment which is sufficiently challenging and organised and, above all, learning is made fun. They are developing good organisational skills and increasing their independence through the regular and consistent classroom routines. They are praised for their efforts, which develops their self-esteem, and pupils' success is shared by the whole school community.

Each class contains two year groups, who integrate well. Staff plan activities skilfully to meet the needs of both age groups, with some pupils working at levels above their age group on more challenging tasks. This worked well with one class, for example, who were studying fractions by dividing up their 'pepperoni pizzas', with groups working at two different levels and then additional more challenging work given to those who had completed their task. Those pupils who need additional support or for whom English is not their first language are appropriately provided for within each class.

The younger pupils are given a very good start to their school life. They are taught effectively through a well planned and organised range of stimulating activities. The

classroom assistant gives very good support. The younger pupils particularly enjoy role play and during the inspection staged a magnificent medieval banquet, complete with the Queen, knights, jester and ladies-in-waiting.

There are several systems in place to assess pupils' progress. Teachers diligently record information gained through testing pupils on entry, using the Foundation Stage profile, assessments made at the end of units of work, diagnostic assessments and national tests taken at the end of key stages. The procedures in place to record and analyse this information now need streamlining into a more consistent system. The information gained can then help staff to follow pupils' progress more accurately and identify individual strengths and weaknesses. Staff have some training opportunities but additional training will enable them to keep up to date with current developments..

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school makes good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. The school was founded and is run by the Seventh Day Adventist Church and this provides a strong spiritual basis for the school. Pupils are taught Bible stories in RE and have daily assemblies. This Christian ethos provides the foundation not just for the spiritual aspect but permeates all school activities. The school motto is '*Spiritus, Mens, Corpus*', which means '*to train equally the spirit, mind and body*'. The school aims to encourage pupils to be thinkers rather than reflectors of other people's thoughts and to encourage them to believe in their own capabilities. It succeeds in this well. Older pupils take part in 'The System', where they are well prepared for the adult world. This all helps prepare them well for the next stage of their education and have a lot of fun on the way. The school achieves much success with pupils gaining in self-confidence, particularly towards the top end of the school; they are clear about their role in the school community and value this.

The headteacher and staff set high expectations of behaviour which all pupils meet successfully. Pupils are polite and friendly to visitors and are very supportive of one another. They form a cohesive family group and the older pupils act as very good role models for the younger ones.

Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong. They understand the simple rules, which they helped to formulate. The school is a very obedient community where pupils behave very well and are sensible but not repressed. They all mix well but playtimes have to be staggered due to the small size of the play area. Pupils regularly take part in school productions and at the time of the inspection were busy preparing for the end of term carol concert. Older pupils are given a sense of responsibility and have simple tasks to perform, such as showing visitors around the school. During the inspection they prepared and served a magnificent lunch as part of a food technology project.

The school is part of the Adventist church and wider community and pupils visit local old people at Christmas and raise funds for local charities. The school takes its role as a promoter of healthy living seriously, as evidenced by displays of pupils' work and discussions with pupils.

There are pupils from different nationalities in the school who are fully integrated. They have the opportunity to share their faiths and cultural heritage and parents come into school to share these with all the pupils, for example a parent came and demonstrated how a Chinese tea ceremony is held. Curriculum visits outside the school and work in art, history, drama and music add an additional cultural dimension.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. The school is a safe and caring place for pupils to learn. Staff know pupils very well and relationships are very good.

There are appropriate policies and procedures in relation to behaviour and anti-bullying and teachers apply these well. Attendance registers and accident records are carefully maintained. Risk assessments are carefully prepared for visits in the locality of the school. The annual residential visit is risk assessed, but the headteacher is planning to introduce additional documentation to cover the full range of activities involved. The required fire safety and premises checks are carried out regularly and advice given is acted upon promptly. There is a suitable policy for child protection. However, the named child protection officer has not yet attended up-to-date training in line with current Department for Education and Skills (DfES) guidance. The school reacted very promptly to correct this omission and the staff member is now booked on an appropriate course. First aid arrangements are good. Staff are appropriately trained, with clear procedures set out in the first aid policy. Well stocked first aid boxes are available and detailed records kept.

The school has carried out an assessment of what it needs to do to make the school more accessible to people with disabilities and has prepared a detailed plan setting out how it intends to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

The school meets all but one of the requirements.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply fully with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- *ensure that the designated child protection officer and all staff receives appropriate training to comply with current DfES guidance (paragraph 3(2)(b)).*

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has checked all staff to confirm their suitability to work with children. There are appropriate staff appointment procedures in place. The school is run under the guidelines of the education department of the British Union Conference of Seventh Day Adventists based in Watford and as such adheres to the church's principles. Staff are offered some training by the church.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation

The school premises and accommodation are suitable. The school has exclusive use of the upper and lower ground floors of the Plymouth Adventist Church. The upper floor provides two classrooms, a small hall and the office/staff room, which is also a base for the headteacher. The lower ground floor, recently renovated, provides a further classroom and a spacious foundation stage area, together with washroom and kitchen facilities.

The school is in sound decorative order and is clean and tidy. Although compact, the teaching areas are adequately matched to the small class sizes and neither safety nor the effectiveness of teaching and learning are compromised. The walls and corridors are made attractive with displays of pupils' work, celebrating achievement. There are sufficient washroom and toilet facilities for pupils and staff. There are suitable facilities to meet the needs of pupils who are ill. Classroom furniture is of an appropriate size for all pupils. Due to the size of the hall there are some limitations on the size of physical education apparatus which can be used indoors and this constrains the level of challenge open to the older pupils.

Outside play space is limited to an enclosed hard surface area to the rear of the building. Recently this area has been upgraded to provide a more interesting play space. Some use is made of local facilities for team games and swimming.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners

The school provides a good range of information for parents. There is a helpful, informative prospectus which gives a good flavour of life at the school. Regular newsletters and an up-to-date notice board help to keep parents well informed. They

receive a detailed written report on their child's progress at the end of the summer term. Parents have informal opportunities to meet with the staff and more formal consultation meetings each term.

Parents who responded to the questionnaire sent out before the inspection expressed a very high degree of satisfaction with the school. Several quoted memorable incidents such as, '*Today my child could not wait to run into school after half-term.*'

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints

The recently devised complaints procedures meet current regulations and a copy is available to parents and prospective parents.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Fletewood School
DfES Number:	879/6001
Type of school:	Christian Primary
Status:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys: 28 Girls: 17 Total: 45
Number on roll (part-time pupils):	Boys: 3 Girls: 3 Total: 6
Annual fees (day pupils):	£2760
Address of school:	88 North Road East Plymouth Devon PL4 6AN
Telephone number:	01752 663782
Fax number:	01752 663782
Email address:	Headteacher@fletewoodschool.co.uk
Headteacher:	Mr J Martin
Proprietor:	South England Conference of Seventh Day Adventists
Reporting Inspector:	Jill Bainton
Date of inspection:	20 – 23 November 2006

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