



The National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools  
(Carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005)

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# Blackfordby St Margaret's Church of England Primary School

## Inspection Report

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<b>Address of School:</b>	Off Main Street Blackfordby Swadlincote DE11 8AB
<b>Telephone Number:</b>	01283 217702
<b>Email Address:</b>	office@blackfordby.leics.sch.uk
<b>School Category:</b>	Voluntary Aided
<b>Unique Reference Number:</b>	120117
<b>Type of School:</b>	Primary
<b>Diocese:</b>	Leicester
<b>Local Authority:</b>	Leicestershire
<b>Inspection Date:</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> January 2012
<b>Reporting Inspector (and No):</b>	Mrs Gail Forryan (No 211)
<b>Appropriate Authority:</b>	The Governing Body
<b>Chair of Governors:</b>	Mr Robin Vryenhoef
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Miss Susan Vernon
<b>Pupils on school roll:</b>	79

## **Blackfordby St Margaret's CE (Aided) Primary School**

Off Main Street  
Blackfordby  
Swadlincote  
DE11 8AB

### **Diocese: Leicester**

Local authority: Leicester

Dates of inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> January 2012

Date of last inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> September, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> October 2009

School's unique reference number: 120117

Headteacher: Miss Susan Vernon

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Gail Forryan (No 211)

### **School context**

Blackfordby St Margaret's is a smaller than average school situated in a small village close to the Leicestershire/Derbyshire border. Nearly all pupils are of White British origin. The school has been through a period of change since the last inspection. In November 2009 the school's primary status was fully restored. The first cohort of Yr 4s began in September 2010 and will leave at the end of Yr 6 in July 2013. The school's capacity has been raised to 105. An extensive programme of building work was signed off on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2012.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Blackfordby St Margaret's as a Church of England school are good**

The school is strongly committed to its Christian foundation. Relationships across the school are good and there are positive links with local churches and the local community. The Christian ethos of the school is evident in the way children conduct themselves around the school and particularly within the excellent standard of behaviour and manners.

### **Established strengths**

- Strong commitment to the school's Christian foundation with values that permeate the school's mission and practice.
- Strong links with parents, local churches and community.
- Good relationships at all levels.
- A friendly, calm and respectful atmosphere, which produces outstanding behaviour and mature learners.

### **Focus for development**

- Enable governors to take a more prominent role in the monitoring and evaluation of the school as a church school.
- Enhance collective worship by giving opportunities for children to frequently lead significant areas of everyday worship.
- Develop knowledge and understanding of other faiths in our multi-cultural society by involving visitors and undertaking visits to support collective worship, RE and community cohesion.

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

Blackfordby St Margaret's is a welcoming school with a strong Christian ethos. An extensive programme of building work was signed off on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2012, just seven days before this inspection. The new frontage includes four exquisite stained glass windows, which link the seasons with aspects of the village community. The wording in the windows proclaims the Christian values that are important to the school: constancy, perseverance, patience and hope. To further affirm the Christian status of the school, an existing statue of Jesus is ready

to be permanently sited in the new hall. A plaque is also in the process of being made, "By your fruits shall you know them", (Matthew Ch. 7 v 20), to foster through every strand of school life the manifestation of Christian values. Displays around school celebrate the links with the local church and community and the Chinese New Year. Children are happy to come to school and are excited by the new building. One child commented: "The new school will allow everyone to get together in a lovely space." All staff have supported the drive to raise standards and attainment, which is now good across the whole school. Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibility; for example, by acting as Road Safety Officers, House Captains and lunchtime monitors. There is a strong sense of Christian fellowship amongst the children, showing they care for others within school and in charitable fundraising for Age UK, Operation Christmas Child and the Poppy Appeal. Spiritual, moral and social education is strength of the school, leading to thoughtful and mature learners. Links with local churches and the community are good; the school is a focal point of village life. The school is committed to furthering community cohesion to ensure pupils are prepared for life in a global society. Through honest self-evaluation processes, the school has rightly identified that they need to ensure that children have a well-developed knowledge and understanding of other faiths and cultures. Curriculum enhancement is provided in a variety of ways including clubs for cross-country and visits to Beaumanor Hall.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory**

Collective worship is a special time for children and staff. The acts of worship observed were well planned using the suggested diocesan themes. The first act of worship observed during the inspection was only the third to be held in the new hall. Due to lack of space during the long-standing building work, whole school assemblies were held only once or twice a week in the church. A child stated: "It will be better now that all the school will be able to meet and pray together every day." There is now great potential to develop the scope of daily collective worship. New resources have been purchased: a smartboard, projector, laptop and sound system. Children have indicated that they would like to be more involved in everyday worship by participating in act-it-outs and writing and saying their own prayers. The first worship observed explored the theme of prayers and blessings and how important they are in the life of the school. The children thanked God for all He has done for them, with several children saying: "Please help our new school to work out perfectly and everyone to be happy." The second worship observed gave the children opportunities to think about what stops them finishing off work. Links were made with Jesus and how life was difficult for Him, and what obstacles He had to face to do God's work. A word footpath was built to show the values of truth, honesty, hope and perseverance. Reflection time encouraged pupils to think of all the things they found difficult and what they can do to overcome these difficulties. There was a table with a cloth and a candle was lit during time for reflection and prayers. The children were well behaved, quiet and respectful and listened to the music played on entering and leaving the hall. Staff attended the assemblies. There is a school prayer, pupils say prayers at playtime, lunchtime and home time. A focus for development from the last inspection on formalising monitoring and evaluation of collective worship has not been met. When leaders are monitoring and evaluating the distinctiveness of the school as a church school, they will need to include the impact that collective worship has on the school community. St Margaret's Church and Blackfordby Methodist Church are used by the school as places of worship particularly for Christian festivals, concerts and Mentions assemblies on Fridays, when parents are invited to see their children mentioned for good achievements, talents and behaviour. A good example of community cohesion was demonstrated at Christmas when children joined members of the Methodist congregation in a service called The Grumpy Innkeeper.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Children and staff enjoy RE and see it as an important part of the curriculum. Lessons are planned using the diocesan scheme of work and with support from the diocesan RE Adviser, a rolling programme has been developed to include Yrs 4 - 6. A focus for development from the previous inspection to formalise the monitoring of RE has been met within whole school procedures for monitoring curriculum subjects. This monitoring gives clear evidence that standards meet national expectations and that the quality of the children's recording and levels of discussion are high. The headteacher is the RE co-ordinator and teaches two classes for RE. A parent commented: "My child enjoys RE. He always comes home and

talks about it.” The children have a good understanding of Christianity, Christian values and symbols, though understanding is less secure in other faiths. In a Reception class the children enjoyed lesson an appropriately pitched telling of the story of Joseph’s coloured coat. They gave examples of when they have felt jealous. They responded well to the joining in with actions such as putting on a serious face and sewing together different coloured materials. It was impressive how quickly and quietly the children settled to their tasks, demonstrating good writing skills and well-drawn pictures. The headteacher, a nursery nurse and a teaching assistant supported pupils. This high ratio of staff to 16 children ensured the children were able to succeed and encouraged good language and communication skills. Children in the Yr 3 class were finding out about fairness and justice through the story of the Chinese New Year. They were well behaved and attentive. Displays of work around the classroom showed that they understood the importance of the festival. Consideration of different qualities and characteristics of people were discussed. Through skilful questioning, the children responded by making thoughtful comments. One child said: “In God’s eyes we are all important.” Effective use of the church and chapel are made to enhance children’s learning.

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

Leadership and management by the headteacher and governing body provide a clear Christian vision for school development and improvement. The main priorities over the past few years have been to have primary status fully restored, the undertaking of an extensive building programme and a clear focus on raising pupil standards so that the future viability of the school is secure. Now this security has been achieved, the challenge is for the governing body to take a more prominent role in the monitoring and evaluation of the school as a church school. Governors are hard working and supportive but at present leadership is mainly reliant on the head teacher. The Chair of Governors has only been in office since May 2011 and new governors have been recently appointed to help strengthen the governing body’s strategic contribution. The headteacher is well respected in the community and she is supported by a highly committed, long serving staff team. Good quality relationships exist at all levels throughout the school community. Children and staff talk about how they feel appreciated and valued as individuals. Parents feel they are fully involved in the life of the school and speak highly about their children’s happiness and progress. They value “the welcoming atmosphere”, “the caring staff” and “the links with the church”. A typical view was the following quotation: “My child loves it here. We are proud of what the school has achieved.”