

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Catsfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Road

Battle

East Sussex

TN33 9DP

Diocese: Chichester

LA: East Sussex

Dates of inspection: 19 and 23 May 2006

Date of last inspection: January 2000

School's Unique reference number: 114494

Headteacher: Mrs R Butters

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Pat Lock

School context

Catsfield C of E Primary School is a smaller than average rural school situated in Catsfield village. The school consists of 3 mixed age classes and a Reception Class. Whilst approximately half of the school live in the local village, the remainder come from wider neighbouring areas. Pupils have an average level of attainment on entry to the school. The school is set in a quiet rural setting and enjoys strong community links with the village and St Lawrence's church. The current main building dates from 1845, and this has recently been enhanced by a large extension which includes a new school hall, an additional permanent classroom, office and entrance areas. Existing areas within the school have been utilised creatively to gain an extended library, storage space and small group areas. These new facilities have enabled the school to develop and enhance the curriculum, including better provision for Collective Worship.

Summary Judgement

- Catsfield is a good church school. It has a strong Christian ethos that permeates all relationships within the school. There is a very positive nurturing environment in which the pupils flourish. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe, valued and respected. They feel supported and encouraged and are proud of their achievements. They have a strong sense of belonging to both the school and the village community and this is a significant strength.
- The school is well managed by the Headteacher who has made significant changes in her short time in post. She is well aware of the strengths and weakness of the school and is thus able to identify areas for improvement. The staff work well as a team and share the
- Christian vision of the school. Parents are very supportive of the school and share in all aspects of daily life.
- Collective Worship is central to the school day.

Established strengths

- The very good attitudes and politeness of the pupils which have a significant impact on both learning and the ethos of the school.
- The excellent quality of relationships between pupils, staff and the local community.
- The care, support and encouragement that are given to all pupils which enables them to be valued as individuals.

Focus for development

- To develop long, medium and short term plans for Collective Worship which will include monitoring and evaluations.
- To raise the standard of Collective Worship and resources by training all staff and agreeing a shared understanding of its aims within a Church school environment.

How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?

The school makes good provision for all its pupils. Pupils, parents and governors spoke highly of the supportive, friendly environment that permeates the school at all levels and enables pupils to develop in all aspects of their learning and well-being.

Behaviour management is good and pupils appreciate the reward systems that are in place. Pupils and parents referred to the new behaviour policy that has led to recent improvements.

Pupils enjoy school and referred to their teachers who make the lessons fun. They also feel safe and are fully aware of what to do in instances of bullying, illness or dealing with any other concerns they may have. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm of playground Sports Leaders and Buddies. They enjoyed the responsibility given to them but were also proud of the high level of care, nurture and friendship that was offered by the older pupils to the younger ones.

The school has excellent links with the local and wider community and pupils are encouraged to consider the needs of others. This has been demonstrated by fund-raising events for various charities eg Love boxes and a £750 donation to LEPRRA. Pupils also made and distributed Christmas cards throughout the village. There are very strong links with the local church which has led to the distribution of Harvest gifts in the village.

The very good development of the school as being distinctively Christian has clearly led to the good relationships that are present throughout the school community, and was identified through interviews with parents and governors.

What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?

Collective Worship is an important part of the school day with a regular pattern of worship throughout the week. Pupils respond well and there is a high expectation of behaviour. Pupils listen well to music from a CD and participate well with a range of songs and hymns. The school has recently completed a draft policy for Collective Worship, although this currently gives no guidance for planning or evaluation. The quality of worship is inconsistent across the school and does not always focus on a Christian link or meaning and application. There is currently no long term, medium term or short term planning and therefore a judgement could be made only on the content of what was seen during the inspection. However, the school has already identified these issues and drawn up an action plan to address them.

There is good evidence of Christian symbols around the school and further plans are in place to make a cross and creation banner for the new hall. The children have a school prayer, although they are not yet all fully conversant with the Lord's Prayer. There are small worship areas in the classrooms which are variable and are not always a major focus.

St Lawrence's church staff lead worship on a weekly basis and they have clear plans for the term which are based on the Anglican cycle and traditions. This includes the Foundation governor. Services are held regularly in the church and parents are invited to attend. It is anticipated that these services may increase to six times annually to coincide with the six terms.

How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?

The leadership and management of the school as a church school is effective. The headteacher demonstrates good leadership skills and has been able to identify areas for development. She clearly aims to raise the profile of the school as being distinctively Christian and has both the knowledge and capability to lead this forward for the whole staff. As a new head she has already introduced a new motto "Love of Learning - Love of Life" and this is now incorporated into the letterhead and other documentation. The school is planning to change the school badge of a cat's head, to reflect the Christian ethos. The pupils, parents and wider community will be involved with the new design.

Staff are strategically led and have all received training in using the SEAL materials, which along with other strategies through PSHE, have led to improved behaviour throughout the school. This has been recognised by pupils, who work positively to gain the Politeness Cup in Celebration Assembly on a Friday.

The school is offering a broad curriculum including sports clubs and other extra curricular clubs.

Priority is given to the Every Child Matters agenda and this is clearly behind many of the developments and improvements in the school.

The governors had a sound overview of the school and their standards of monitoring are satisfactory.