

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Charsfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Charsfield
Woodbridge
Suffolk
IP13 7QB

Diocese: St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

LA: Suffolk

Dates of inspection: 28 February 2006

Date of last inspection: December 1999

School's Unique reference number: 124725

Headteacher: Val Jones

Inspector's name and number: Simon Windmill

School context

Charsfield Primary is a small rural school serving the village of Charsfield and surrounding area. The Headteacher has been in post for almost a year. Most learners are of white British heritage, with a few of other backgrounds. Many learners are from outside the catchment area. The school's Self Evaluation Form gives a generally accurate evaluation of the school, though some judgements on Collective Worship are rather harsh. Nevertheless, it provides a secure base for further development.

Summary Judgement

Charsfield school's effectiveness and distinctiveness as a church school is judged to be good overall. Its Christian character and ethos meet the needs of all learners well, with outstanding features in some areas. Leadership and management are good, and Collective Worship is satisfactory. The school is very well placed to make the improvements it has identified.

Established strengths

The school's Christian ethos and values play a very significant part in upholding an atmosphere of welcome, care, collaboration and inclusivity

- Relationships between staff and learners are outstanding
- The behaviour of learners is outstanding
- The degree to which all learners are valued is outstanding

Focus for development

The Headteacher and management team have identified a need for staff and governors to reach a shared understanding of what it means to be a Church school, focussing on

- What is meant by spiritual development, and how to foster it in learners
- A review of the Collective Worship policy
- How the school's Christian foundation is reflected in visible signs and symbols

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

The school's provision for meeting the needs of all its learners is good, with some outstanding features.

The Christian ethos and values have a good impact on the school. All relationships within the school are outstandingly caring and respectful. The school's warm, welcoming and inclusive atmosphere reflects this, as does the outstanding behaviour of learners, who feel valued, included and secure. Learners contribute in many ways to the life of the school, and take responsibility for a variety of day-to-day tasks. Learners receive outstanding care and support in their learning and personal development, with Headteacher and staff providing good role models. The School Council is an effective means of listening to and acting on learner's needs and wants. The school is very highly regarded by its wider community. The planned development of a shared understanding of what it means to be a Church school will include areas such as what is meant by spiritual growth, and how it can be fostered across the curriculum and throughout all aspects of school life.

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

The impact of Collective Worship on the school community is satisfactory.

Collective Worship is satisfactory. It is based on Christian principles, and learners enjoy worship and the opportunities it gives to be actively involved. It satisfactorily reflects the main events of the Church year, and always includes prayer, praise and teaching. Learners have a good understanding of the purposes and styles of prayer, and some say prayers readily during worship. Their prayers are collected in a book. Church links are very good, including a Christian 'Fun Club' meeting after school. As part of the discussion on what it means to be a Church school, the Collective Worship policy is being reviewed. A more coherent structure of worship themes is planned, with systems for recording, monitoring and evaluating worship. Allowing learners to plan and lead worship is being considered. Ways of reflecting the school's Christian foundation visually are being discussed, for example by lighting a candle or having flowers to mark out Collective Worship as a special time, and by using other Christian symbols around the school. Introducing the Lord's prayer and using some simple Anglican liturgy in worship are being considered. A review of resources has begun, to include the use of IT such as interactive whiteboards to enhance worship, and a budget for worship has been set. The debate on how spiritual development can be fostered is expected to feed into this review.

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

Leadership and management is good.

The Head's leadership and management is very good. The Head and governors together provide good leadership in promoting the school's distinctive Christian ethos and values. Staff feel very positive about the leadership, and feel highly valued and supported. A good team spirit is evident within the staff. The governors' informed, active and supportive role in school development is effective. Some of the longer-serving governors and staff felt that in the past 'church' matters had been neglected, but since her appointment the new Head has been rectifying this, the school has been moving forward, and is very well placed to continue to improve.