

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Great Waltham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

South Street,
Great Waltham,
Chelmsford,
Essex,
CM3 1DF

Diocese of Chelmsford

Essex LEA

SIAS Inspection: 25th April 2006

Previous Section 23 Inspection 14 – 15th October 1999

URN: 115114

Headteacher: Mrs. Diane Wilson

SIAS Inspector: Mrs. Dianne Jackson

School context

Great Waltham Church of England Primary School is a small semi-rural school with 134 children. It has a rising roll, attracting pupils from Chelmsford and nearby villages. Most pupils come from a British white background, with <1% coming from other ethnic groups. The Headteacher was appointed in September 2004. Working conditions for the staff and Headteacher have recently been improved by remodelling the offices and staff facilities.

Summary Judgement

This is a good church school, with a positive Christian ethos and is very effective in providing for the needs of all its learners. The school has high expectations of all members of its community and this is appreciated by the parents.

Established strengths

- A Christian ethos in which all community members feel supported and valued.
- Very good relationships between the staff and children, which are based upon mutual respect.
- A high level of pastoral care with a strong belief in the development of the whole child.

Focus for development

- To clarify the distinct nature of Collective Worship in the school documentation and provide the coordinator with a role description.
- To involve all stakeholders, especially the worship leaders, in a more focused approach to monitoring and evaluating the quality of Collective Worship and to produce an action plan, which will impact upon the children's experience.
- For staff and governors to engage in dialogue regarding the nature of spirituality, producing a shared view and guidance to develop the community's spiritual well being.

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

The school makes good provision to meet the needs of all learners through its distinctive Christian character. The school provides a happy learning environment and the children's achievements are consistently acknowledged through the marking scheme and Celebration assemblies. The children respond positively to the responsibilities they are given in the School Council and Class Forums and they feel that their opinions are valued. Use is made of pupil surveys and children are invited to comment upon Collective Worship. The excellent provision for the children's care and well-being is enhanced by a wide range of out-of-hours clubs, as well as initiatives such as the Advanced Healthy School Accreditation and Playground Friends project. Christian values are expressed through the Golden Rules, which are central to the school's Behaviour Code. The children demonstrate concern and support for other community members, as well as for children in developing countries. Relationships within the school are very positive and are founded upon mutual respect. Pupils have been introduced to the concept of reflection as a learning strategy as well as an element of Collective Worship. Exploring ways of progressively developing the school's spiritual life has not been focused upon.

What is the impact of Collective Worship on the school community?

Collective worship has a good impact on the school community. Collective Worship is the key element of the school's Christian witness and it forms an important part its daily life. The acts of worship are well planned and organised. The coordinator provides helpful guidance to the worship leaders to ensure that the worship is consistently Christian and follows the Anglican tradition. The school is well supported by the local clergy and ministers from other denominations. The school is sensitive to beliefs and traditions of other faiths and uses them to explore the universal beliefs. The majority of children listen attentively and respond positively to opportunities to actively engage in worship. The children can clearly articulate the types of worship that they find inspiring and reflective, but their understanding of the purpose of worship is not secure. The range of strategies used for praise and prayer is limited. Most prayers are read by the worship leader and children only participate in the 'amen'.

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

The school's leadership and management of the school, as a church school, is good overall. The school prospectus, ethos statement and policies make clear reference to the school's Christian character and the Headteacher and foundation governors provide good role models with regard to Christian values. Governors regularly attend acts of worship and initiated the link with a school in Tanzania. The school is being well lead and managed. Surveys show that the parents are pleased with the education and experience that the school provides for their children. The school's effective monitoring and evaluation system is not being so rigorously applied to Collective Worship. Governors and children are involved in monitoring, but the findings are not being used to produce a specific action plan. The process is not impacting upon the children's experience and the school has not developed a long-term vision for Collective Worship's development.

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