

# National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

## All Saints' Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Vicarage Road  
Newmarket  
Suffolk  
CB8 8JE

### Diocese: St Edmundsbury & Ipswich

Local authority: Suffolk LA  
Dates of inspection: Friday 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2007  
Date of last inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2003  
School's unique reference number: 124761  
Headteacher: Mrs Jane Eccleston  
Inspector's name and number: Mrs D F Lenton/460

### School context

All Saints' Church of England Primary School is smaller than average. The children who attend come from the town of Newmarket and outlying areas. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The area around the school has pockets of social disadvantage. The school is within the Parish of All Saints' Church, which is in the adjoining street. It also takes children from the Parish of St Mary's, on the opposite side of the main street.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of All Saints' Primary as a Church of England school are outstanding

All Saints' Church of England Primary School is a highly effective and distinctive church school. It is rooted in the Christian values of love and forgiveness. This is achieved through the commitment and leadership of the head teacher, with the support of a strong governing body, who together have a clear vision for the school. The staff are a dedicated and talented team who, through the strength of their Christian relationships, are able to nurture each child in their care.

### Established strengths

- The strength of the Christian commitment from all connected with the school
- The confidence of the children to articulate their faith
- The inclusiveness of the school
- The exceptional talents of the staff

### Focus for development

- Embedding the New Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education into teachers' planning and assessment
- Developing the role of children as worship leaders
- Reviewing Collective Worship and training in the light of the new Diocesan material

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

The Christian ethos of All Saints' Church of England Primary School is very strong and permeates every aspect of the school's life, from displays and documentation to the relationships within the whole school community. One member of staff described the school as "open and believing".

The distinctiveness of the school as a church school is clearly seen in the excellent displays around the school, depicting Bible stories and reminding children of God's love for them and His world. In the entrance the display of crosses is headed with "Every Child Matters to God". Christian values are evident throughout the school: the high quality of the care within the school is seen in the way children and adults display love and patience to one another through politeness and consideration; and the children are quick to help each other and have a highly developed sense of right and wrong, which contributes to their sensitivity to one another. The children are also confident in their understanding of what it means to belong to a church school. They have a high regard for all the adults who work in the school. One said, "Everyone cares about the school."

The school's inclusive policy is exceptional. There is a large percentage of children with special educational needs attending the school. These children who failed in other schools are developing and flourishing in the caring and nurturing atmosphere that is evident in the school. There is excellent provision for all children through the enriched extended school curriculum, including art and stories from other cultures, provided by visitors from other countries to the school. The Breakfast and After-School clubs are well attended. The children demonstrate the practical application of the Christian values of giving and sharing through the many charities that they support, including The Children's Society, Children in Need and through sponsoring a child in India.

The school environment provides an exceptionally effective opportunity for children's spiritual development. An area dedicated to reflection allows the children to be still and quiet. This excellent area is provided with high quality material for the children to choose to read or to hold. A prayer tree gives the children the opportunity to write down short prayers to God, for example. One boy commented, "It gets me to think – it can affect you and your friends."

The School Council is a strong influence in the school. It is impressive in the way it takes its responsibilities seriously. It is considering the use of another reflective area outside in the playground so that children can talk to a sympathetic listener if they are worried or upset. This articulate and remarkably mature group also helped to interview the new deputy head.

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

Collective Worship is central to the life of the school. Everyone in the school community acknowledges its importance and there is widespread agreement that this provides children and adults with an opportunity to worship God. The vicar states that evidence of its impact can be seen in Religious Education, where children demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of God. He sees the children demonstrating a "collective faith and understanding that they are part of something bigger than themselves". Parents said that through this time children became aware of the wider world. Collective Worship is extremely effective in the way that it is conducted. The CW observed involved children and adults sharing and providing high quality moments for thought and encouragement using the Christmas story. Children listed this time as one of the highlights of their day.

After Collective Worship, during the assembly, children are affirmed through the presentation of merit awards. This demonstrates the value that the school places, not only on academic achievement, but also on good relationships through being a good friend, for example.

The coordinator has been careful to assess the impact of Collective Worship and has produced a wealth of evidence in the CW folder of children's comments. These ranged from liking particular aspects such as singing to comments such as, "I learned that we need to think about others not just ourselves". Prayers are also said at the beginning and end of the school day. CW is monitored regularly by the vicar, the head teacher and the coordinator. All staff conscientiously evaluate the impact of CW through their daily observations recorded in the CW folder.

Collective Worship is well planned using the Diocesan scheme. The vicar, as governor responsible for monitoring CW, and staff will receive training in implementing the new diocesan material. There is a well-balanced structure for using class as well as whole school

CW. Children are used effectively as monitors and for reading prayers. They carry out their duties with confidence and assurance. As they develop this role it deepens their understanding of the nature of worship. Good use is made of the local church of All Saints for some special services such as the Leavers' Service and for many Christian Festivals such as Christmas and Easter.

The very close ties with the local church community are strengthened by the involvement in the school of the local vicar who leads CW every other Thursday. He has successfully introduced the children to Liturgy through the use of responses in prayer, as well as use of the Lord's Prayer. His presence in the school is very significant, and his desire to encourage children to see beyond the obvious creates a special spiritual dimension to the school. Many children mentioned his leading of CW as being particularly stimulating. "The vicar makes you laugh" was one comment.

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

Religious Education plays a central role in the life of this school. The challenge of the new policy of learning not only about religion but from it is being met very effectively. Children are enthusiastic and articulate confidently on how faith affects their lives. The deputy head's imminent departure for Thailand to work in an orphanage is proving an extremely effective witness of faith in action. In one RE lesson a tape, made by the deputy head for another year group, was played to the children. On it she explained why she felt God was telling her to go and work with the orphans. Children and adults in the class were all moved by this powerful witness, and there was a real sense of God's presence in the classroom.

The children have very good knowledge of the subject and explain their work confidently. In all lessons observed the children listened well and worked enthusiastically. The work in their books was stimulating and interesting. A very effective method used for marking by teachers is to pose further questions, for example, "How do you know God is with you?" This has created an excellent platform for reflective thinking and allows those children who do not always succeed in other areas of the curriculum to flourish. Visits to the local parish churches of All Saints' and St Mary's are used to enrich the curriculum through studying the buildings themselves as well as reflecting on what takes place there. Strengthening ties with the Diocese has enabled children to take advantage of special education days in the cathedral in Bury St Edmunds.

The Religious Education Policy is well organised and planned by the RE Coordinator. She has excellent subject knowledge and shares her expertise with other staff. She has led effective staff meetings on the New Agreed Syllabus, which will enable staff to embed this into their planning and assessment for the future. The governor responsible for RE, who is also the local vicar, monitors this subject regularly. He is able through his reports to identify strengths and areas for development. He has also kept himself well informed by attending the Diocesan training in the new RE syllabus. Standards are assessed through careful scrutiny by staff of children's work. Standards in RE are slightly above those of other core subjects.

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

The leadership and management of this school are extremely effective. The head teacher and the Foundation governors have a very clear Christian vision for the school. This vision is outlined in the school prospectus and is shared consistently with all stakeholders in the school. For example, outside bodies who work within the school, such as Social Services, are keenly aware of the school's Christian identity when talking to staff and working with the children. The Governing Body shares the vision when advertising for new members of staff. Advertisements clearly state the desirability of employing someone committed to developing the distinctiveness of the school as a church school, and to having a personal Christian faith. This is reflected in the present staff, whose commitment to the school and each other is outstanding. Effective Performance management takes place in which all adults are encouraged to share in the vision of the school.

The Foundation governors act as strong, reflective, critical friends to the school, particularly when considering its aims and admissions policy. Within an atmosphere of mutual respect,

the governors are willing to challenge and question the leadership. At the same time they are very supportive and encouraging. The chair says that the strength of the school is its Christian foundation and its willingness to “go the second mile” with children who have struggled in the past. There is a good working relationship between the leadership team and the governing body generally. This has been enhanced through the self-evaluation of the Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools (SIAS) form.

The links with the local and church communities are very strong, particularly through the Collective Worship shared with parents and children at the school. Parents are invited to attend Collective Worship in Thursdays, led by the vicar, and it is well supported. Coffee provided by the school afterwards allows parents and staff quality time to talk to the vicar concerning matters of faith and spirituality. This is an excellent link with the parish of All Saints'. The enthusiasm of the children in the school encourages parents to attend, particularly Family Services and special events such as Mothering Sunday and the Christingle Service. The link is further strengthened as some of the governors are also members of the Parochial Church Council. Parents who belong to the Parent-Teacher Association and who are also leaders in the Junior Church at All Saints' said there was a strong feeling of continuity between the school and the church. Parents are kept well informed about events being held in the church, when notes are put into children's book bags, for example.

Parents are delighted at the way in which children are encouraged in the school to care for the community in which they live through practical expressions of the Christian values of love, sharing and service. This is achieved by visiting local homes for the elderly and by celebrating All Saints' Day through focusing on helping and doing jobs for others. This has created a caring and effective church school community.

SIAS report December, 2007 All Saints' Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Newmarket, Suffolk, CB8 8JE