

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Ashwicken Church of England Voluntary Aided First School**

East Winch Road

Ashwicken,

Kings Lynn

Norfolk

PE32 1LY

**Diocese: Norwich**

LEA: Norfolk

Date of inspection: 25 September 2007

Date of last inspection: April 2003

School's unique reference number: 121135

Name of Headteacher: Susan Collison

Name of Inspector: Simon Windmill

NS number: 182

### **Context**

Ashwicken Church of England Primary School is a small rural village school in Norfolk. It has established links with the local parish church. One fifth of the pupils live in Ashwicken – the remainder come from outlying villages or the town of Kings Lynn. Almost all pupils come from white British backgrounds.

### **Summary Judgement**

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ashwicken as a Church of England school are good.**

The school's Christian ethos is very evident within the school. It is shown in the caring and supportive relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils' personal development and behaviour are good, and they enjoy learning within a stimulating, caring and safe atmosphere.

### **Established strengths**

- The excellent supportive Christian ethos, which underpins all aspects of school life and is reflected in the behaviour of pupils and the relationships throughout the school
- The caring atmosphere, which makes pupils feel valued, special and safe
- The very strong commitment to Eco-awareness

### **Focus for development**

- Explore the school's understanding of spiritual development and how to nurture it in the pupils
- Develop a process for recording and evaluating the impact of Collective Worship on pupils
- Develop more opportunities for pupils to plan, lead and participate in Collective Worship

**The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding in meeting the needs of all pupils.**

Care and support for pupils and staff is outstanding. Pupils of all abilities are able to flourish in their learning and personal development. The school's Christian ethos is soundly based on Christian values, which have a very positive influence on the life of the school. This is seen in the excellent relationships between staff and pupils, and the school's warm, friendly, welcoming and inclusive atmosphere. Surveys of parents and pupils showed very high satisfaction levels, for example 100% of parents said that the school promoted healthy eating and exercise, and 100% of parents and 98% of pupils said children felt safe and well cared for at school.

Christian values promote the school's strong commitment to caring for the environment. It has gained the Eco School's Silver award, is applying for the top Eco Green Flag award, and makes a massive effort to be ecologically responsible in all its activities, from simple recycling right through to the building of an 'Eco classroom', to be built to the highest possible ecological standards.

Pupils learn from the good role models of staff and other adults, who help them develop self-confidence and independence. Their behaviour is excellent. Through the School Council they have a say in formulating the school rules, understand and respect them, and know the consequences if rules are broken. Pupils' awareness and concern for the needs of others is good, and is seen in their contributions to charitable causes.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong, and a strong sense of social responsibility. Reflecting on the wonders of creation is encouraged in Collective Worship and across the curriculum. The lack of a specific policy for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development means that staff do not yet have a shared understanding of how spiritual growth can be encouraged. The Christian identity of the school is visible in many ways, such as in the school logo which combines a cross and a tree, reflecting both the school's church foundation and the school's name. Many displays around the school are linked with Collective Worship or Religious Education.

**The impact of Collective Worship on the school community is good.**

Collective Worship is a focal point of each day and is soundly based on the Christian gospel. A cross and a candle give worship a visual focus. Worship usually includes singing, teaching and time for prayer and reflection.

Staff lead most of the worship. Once a month a School Worker from the Crowns Trust leads worship, and runs a Christian holiday club for the first week of Summer holidays. Worship is well planned, and uses a range of styles and approaches to give variety.

Pupils enjoy worship, especially when they have an active part to play in it. They say they would like even more opportunities to contribute in worship and take part in different ways, for example by acting out stories, or helping to plan or lead worship.

Pupils understand a good range of purposes and styles of prayer, and would like to have opportunities to write their own prayers to use during Collective Worship. They know the school's prayer and Lord's Prayer, which is sometimes said during worship.

Worship is planned around a theme for each week, which reflects the church year. The parish church is used for special services, celebrating the main festivals such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest. Collective Worship is not yet formally recorded, monitored or evaluated to assess its impact on pupils.

### **The effectiveness of Religious Education is good.**

Religious Education is a very important part of the school's life. The co-ordinator has release time to fulfil and develop her role. The new Norfolk syllabus is being introduced, with input from staff and the Vicar, who is the link governor. As the syllabus is implemented, planning and lesson observations will be introduced to monitor the effectiveness of RE. RE is well resourced.

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned, linked to previous work, with clear objectives which the pupils can understand. Lessons are interactive, stimulating and well paced, so all pupils are engaged and enthusiastic. They are able to explain what the lessons were about, what their tasks were, and to express their own views about the work they are given.

Lessons are varied in style, so that all pupils can experience different ways of learning. RE teaching links with and contributes to, other curriculum areas, for example by linking the story of Joseph with work on Egypt, or linking the parable of the sower with growing plants in the classroom and grounds. Local people of faiths other than Christianity have visited the school to tell pupils about their beliefs and festivals.

Standards of achievement are good. Pupils are able to apply their learning to their own personal experiences, and this contributes to their spiritual, social and moral development. Teachers' knowledge is secure in teaching about Christianity, and they are gaining confidence in teaching about other faiths.

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

The Headteacher and Governors give good leadership and management to the school. The headteacher's leadership is "good, and provides a clear sense of direction" (Ofsted 2007). Governors have a good understanding and knowledge of the school, and staff are very positive about the school's leadership and management. The staff and governors have revised the school's Church school's vision statement, and Collective Worship and RE has been audited by the co-ordinator. Staff are positive about these developments and are putting them into practice.

The school's Christian foundation is shown by prayers at governor meetings, and by including 'practising Christian' among the desirable qualities for staff recruitment.

Governors give effective support and challenge in their performance management role. Communications with parents are good – parents feel fully informed about the life of the school, and are aware of the ways in which they can offer support to the school, such as helping in the classroom, with transport to events and helping to raise funds.

Parents speak very highly of the family atmosphere generated through the school's caring relationships, and are very happy with the school. They feel well informed about the school's activities, through such things as regular newsletters, which are copied to the Parish Council. They also feel informed of church events on the school noticeboard.

Links with the wider community are good. The school is held in high regard by its local community, and local businesses have contributed to funds for developing the school pond and the car park.