

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### Castle Acre Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Stocks Green  
Castle Acre  
Kings Lynn,  
Norfolk  
PE32 2AE

#### Diocese: Norwich

Local authority: Norfolk  
Dates of inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> November 2006  
Date of last inspection: 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> November 1999  
School's unique reference number: 291963  
Headteacher: Mr. Christopher Allen  
Inspector's name and number: Robert Miller 357

#### School context

Castle Acre is a very small school in rural Norfolk that was built in the early 1800's. There are 54 pupils on roll, between the ages of 4 and 9 years. 50 live within the catchment area of the school. All pupils are White and from British backgrounds and they are taught in three classes. The head teacher, a practising Christian, took up his post in September 2004. There is a close relationship with the local church.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Castle Acre as a Church of England school are good.

Castle Acre is a happy and friendly school where the relationships between staff and children make learning an enjoyable experience. The head teacher has created a Christ-centered ethos in the school that emphasises love and mutual respect. This has a positive effect on the pupils, particularly in the way they behave towards each other. Links between the school and the church are strong because of the close working relationship between the head teacher and the clergy. The local rector is not only a school Foundation governor but he also chairs the Parochial Church Council and ensures that regular communication exists between the two.

#### Established strengths

- Good quality acts of worship, involving active participation by pupils, contribute to their opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The very good links with the local church and community.
- The vast majority of the school community demonstrate practical Christianity in their relationships with each other.
- The wide range of opportunities provided through enrichment of the curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

#### Focus for development

- Adopt, ratify and implement the revised school policies for Religious Education and collective worship.
- Improve pupils' spiritual and cultural development by providing more opportunities to learn about faiths and cultures other than their own.
- Develop the role of Foundation governors in monitoring Religious Education and collective worship in order to identify further areas for improvement.
- Make the classroom environment more distinctively Christian to encourage and enhance opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

**The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good at meeting the needs of**

### **all learners**

Castle Acre is a happy school where the staff act as good role models. Children are secure in the knowledge that they are respected, valued and listened to by adults in the school. Those pupils with special educational needs and others who are experiencing difficulties are well cared for and supported. The Christian identity in the school is strong and is emphasised in the school documentation and the newly erected school sign outside the school entrance, which clearly shows it is a church school. However displays and books of a Christian nature are lacking in some of the classrooms. The school is committed to the development of the whole child through its "SEAL" project. This is helping to develop the social and emotional aspects of learning. The school has identified the need to provide more opportunities for pupils to learn about faiths and cultures other than their own. It has begun to address this issue, to further develop pupils' spiritual and cultural development. The governors, a number of whom are new to the post, provide support. However, they have not yet developed their assessment and monitoring role sufficiently well enough to include regular checks on the teaching of Religious Education. The atmosphere around the school is very orderly and children are polite and well mannered most of the time. The vast majority take part in a wide assortment of after-school clubs. Pupils are able to contribute their ideas and concerns through the recently formed School Council and have been able to effect change. This is an improvement since the previous diocesan inspection.

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

Despite the lack of space, great care is taken to ensure that acts of worship take place in a well-organised and peaceful environment. Pupils say that this is the one time during the school day when they have the opportunity to sit in silence and reflect. They love being able to choose the hymns and prayers and feel fully involved in the daily acts of collective worship. Worship makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual development, by making them reflect on the issues of the day and think more deeply about their relationships with each other and the wider world.

The Rector leads the worship on a fortnightly basis and this event is of high quality. The children take an active part in what is a spiritually uplifting occasion. They relish opportunities to act out parables from the Bible and to sing hymns. The music accompaniment from staff enhances these sessions. Worship includes Christian symbols such as a lighted candle and an open Bible as foci and to good effect, in capturing pupils' imaginations. It is well planned and co-ordinated, involving all staff and children in the discussions as to what "Themes" should take place. This is an improvement on the previous diocesan inspection. There is a recently revised policy on Worship that is being adopted and implemented by the governing body. Whilst some informal assessment and monitoring of collective worship is taking place, governors have identified the need to formalise these arrangements on a more consistent and regular basis.

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

The quality of the leadership of the head teacher, a practising Christian, contributes significantly to the success of the school. Together with the Foundation governors, he promotes the Christian vision for the school, where pupils are tolerant towards each other and ready to forgive. Pupils act this out daily by reciting the Lord's Prayer before meals and at the end of the school day. Both he, the school's management team and governors are establishing clear systems that inform the school's self-evaluation process and the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education and acts of collective worship. School policies express its Christian purpose and school rules are couched in terms of forgiveness and reconciliation. The school staff work closely as a team and they receive strong support from its leaders. They share the Christian vision for the school, as do most parents and pupils, who are surveyed regularly for their views. Parents feel that the school is helping their child mature and that they are working to their potential. They say their child enjoys school. The Rector, a Foundation governor, also heads the Parochial Church Council and ensures that there are close fruitful links between both. Because the Rector has responsibility for a number of churches, of varying sizes, in the area, several of these are used for school events and acts of worship. The school regularly uses the church for most major Christian festivals

to enable villagers and parents to attend.

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