

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Chelmondiston Church Of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Woodlands
Chelmondiston
Ipswich
IP9 1DT

Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

LA: Suffolk

Date of inspection: 17 July 2008

Date of last inspection: November 2003

School's unique reference number: 124755

Name of Headteacher: Christine Hayward

Name of Inspector: Simon Windmill

NS number: 182

Context

This smaller than average school serves the village of Chelmondiston and the surrounding area. It has links with its parish church, which is close to the school, and with the local Methodist church. Almost all pupils come from white British backgrounds. The number of pupils with disabilities or learning difficulties is below average when compared nationally.

Summary Judgement

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

The school's Christian ethos and values are embedded in school life, and have a strong positive influence on pupils' personal development and well-being. This contributes to the welcoming 'family' atmosphere felt throughout the school.

Established strengths

- The caring and supportive relationships between pupils, staff and governors
- Pupils' exceptionally good behaviour
- Pupil involvement in collective worship, and decision making through the School Council

Focus for development

- Reviewing the school's Vision Statement and the visual aspects of its Christian foundation
- Developing guidelines for enabling staff to make the most of opportunities for fostering pupils' spiritual and moral development
- Analysing the results of pupil surveys to evaluate and review the impact of Collective Worship on pupils

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

The school's Christian ethos is seen by the headteacher, staff and governors as a fundamentally important part of school life. Care and support for pupils and staff are outstanding, and reflect the Christian values on which the school is based. The 'Every Child Matters' agenda lies at the heart of the school. This is seen in its warm, welcoming, inclusive and friendly atmosphere, in which pupils feel valued and safe.

Staff, parents and governors often remark on the school's family atmosphere, and parents value their opportunities for learning alongside their children. One parent said, "It's just great to be really involved in learning together with our children." Parental survey results show that 100% of parents feel welcomed into the school.

Pupils get on exceptionally well with each other, and with the staff, who provide excellent role models. These relationships greatly help pupils develop self-confidence and independence. They like coming to school, and enjoy their lessons. Their behaviour is outstanding. They respect and obey the school rules, and value the opportunity to help teachers set the rules in each classroom.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and they have a clear understanding of right and wrong. They value the opportunities they have for quiet reflection, both in collective worship and at other times, and they make good use of the quiet area provided in the playground. Pupils' awareness and concern for the needs of others is encouraged, and they willingly help to raise money for charitable causes. They enjoy a very wide range of extra-curricular activities, some of which are run by pupils.

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

The head, staff and pupils see collective worship as an important part of school life, and it is soundly based on Christian values. It always includes prayer from leaders or pupils, singing and teaching. Prayers are also said before lunch.

Pupils see collective worship as a special part of the day, which they enjoy, especially when they have a part to play in it, such as acting out a story or helping the leader. Pupils frequently and readily use their own prayers during worship. A candle is lit as a focal point during worship.

Pupils have a very well developed understanding of the range of styles and purposes of prayer, such as saying thank you, asking for help, saying sorry and asking for healing. They would welcome even more involvement in worship.

Worship is well planned around themes that reflect the main festivals of the Church year, such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest. There are special services for these occasions as well as for other significant events such as when pupils leave the school.

These special services are held in the Church, with the support of church members. In addition to the staff, worship is regularly led by the Rector, the local Methodist minister, a Foundation governor, and by other occasional visiting leaders such as representatives from charities. The Rector also helps teach RE.

The school keeps good records of worship, and it is monitored by staff. Pupil surveys are used to find out what pupils think of worship, and staff are planning to use this data for reviewing and evaluating the impact of collective worship on pupils and the school's policy for collective worship.

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

The Headteacher gives good leadership to the school, and is well supported by the staff and governors. She has a strong vision for the school. Staff and governors, who all contribute well to the life of the school, have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

The staff feel valued and involved in the school's development. They all work together and support each other very well. This contributes greatly to the happy and supportive atmosphere of the school, as does the staff well-being programme, which is much appreciated. The staff and governors undertake regular reviews of their work, and this has a positive impact on the school's overall development.

The strong links with the local churches and the community supports the headteacher and staff in promoting a distinctive Christian vision for the school, with Christian values underpinning its life and work. For example, local clergy and lay ministers from both churches provide pastoral care for the school and wider community. The church is also used as a resource for the RE curriculum.

Questionnaires, surveys, and informal conversations confirm that parents and members of the wider community hold the school in very high regard. They show that they are very happy with the school and feel that the successful and purposeful atmosphere is generated through the school's caring Christian relationships.

The visual aspects of the school's Christian identity are quite low key and are not evident in all classrooms. The school does not have a specific policy for promoting pupils' spiritual development, or guidance for staff in making the most of opportunities for fostering pupils' spiritual growth, but with the support of the newly appointed Rector the school plans to review these areas.

The school's self-assessment is accurate, and provides a good basis for further developments.

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