

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Colkirk Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

School Road,
Colkirk,
Fakenham
Norfolk,
NR21 7NW

Diocese: Norwich

Local authority: Norfolk

Date of inspection: 25 February 2008

Date of last inspection: July 2002

School's unique reference number: 121112

Headteacher: Miss Anne Cottingham (Temporary)

Inspector's name and number: Mr J.W. Bradley NS 129

School context

Colkirk Primary school serves this village close to Fakenham, but approximately 75% of its pupils attend from outside the recognised catchment area. A proportion of these attend because parents wish their children to be educated in a church school. The school is currently in a phase of transition with a temporary headteacher, new chair of governors and the parish in interregnum. The majority of parents are in professional and self-employed occupations. Virtually all the pupils are White British and none speak English as an additional language.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Colkirk Primary as a Church of England school are good

The school is committed to its future and has begun work to consolidate its distinctiveness as a church school. In the forthcoming headteacher appointment the governors wish to employ a candidate who is 'committed to nurture, enhance and further uphold our Christian ethos'. After a period of considerable difficulty four years ago a great deal of hard work has been done to restore the school's reputation and this has been achieved by a concentration upon the Christian values of love and care for all. The atmosphere in the school is one of mutual support and it is clear that all pupils matter as unique individuals.

Established strengths

- The real intent from governors and staff to develop Colkirk Primary as a church school.
- The support for the school from parents and parish, particularly after a period of difficulty.
- The mutual support and care for each other, based upon clear Christian values.

Focus for development

- Governors to develop systems of monitoring and evaluating their church school status.
- Worship to be more formally monitored and evaluated for its impact on pupils.
- Further staff training for delivering RE teaching through the 'Godly Play' resource.

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

Relationships throughout this school are clearly based upon sound Christian foundations. The pupils know they matter as they say 'everyone is kind here' and parents sum this up by saying 'there is an extra feeling of togetherness in this school'. Each and every pupil is afforded the integrity they deserve by a committed staff, supported by effective governors and the local church. Charitable giving is afforded a high profile and pupils understand the benefits of helping others less fortunate. The school's Christian ethos is based upon the

'Starfish Story' and this is prominently displayed throughout the building. The clear Christian values, stemming from this story, of care and love for others are clearly understood by pupils. Pupils are very supportive of each other, particularly those with various difficulties; this fact being very evident to the short term, highly experienced, temporary headteacher. The church offers good support and pupils clearly know they attend a church school, exemplified by the annual procession to church of leaving pupils: an event well known to and valued by parishioners. Parents are highly supportive of the care shown for their children and the Christian values imparted and say 'in this modern age it is important to give children the right values; this school does'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is well planned on a termly thematic basis and is clearly an act of Christian worship. Most staff attend, thus confirming the feeling of a community being and worshipping together. The pupils know why they are there and enjoy the experiences offered to them. They say 'it is good to all be together'. The church's year is closely followed and the Anglican aspects of worship were well covered by the previous incumbent. It is important to the Parochial Church Council that this work with the school should continue to have a high profile in the work of the new rector. Visitors from the Salvation Army and a Kings Lynn worship group show the pupils variety in forms of worship. Regular services held in church are well supported and valued by both parents and parishioners. As a result of developments and improvements in the organisation, introduced by the previous headteacher, pupils understand well the importance attached to worship and why it matters so much as part of their school's daily life. A focal point, such as a candle, is not always used, but when it is, its value in contributing towards an appropriate atmosphere is appreciated by all participants. The pupils know the Lords Prayer and a Grace and as part of their worship experience there are times for reflection on the theme. Worship makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Worship is not currently evaluated for its content or impact but plans are in place for this to be developed.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

A great deal of work has recently been completed in a 'development review' of RE teaching. This has included increased resources, upon which a relatively large amount of money has been spent; varying teaching styles, including pupils' reflections; monitoring of teaching; the introduction of Godly Play and an assessment of children's levels of enthusiasm for the subject. Consequently good procedures are now in place for the delivery and monitoring of RE and this can be seen in some high quality teaching. In a 'Godly Play' lesson about Noah's Ark' very young pupils were totally engaged and able to reflect and comment upon the subject matter in terms relevant to life today, particularly with regard to the feelings of others. Teaching and learning are evaluated by a combination of regular teacher observations, book scrutinies and examination of teacher planning. Pupils are knowledgeable, as demonstrated in a lesson about different kinds of writing in the Bible. Recent initiatives such as 'Colkirk Bible Explorers', when teaching is presented in an exciting and imaginative way, resulted in comments such as 'this inspirational course has really helped bring the Bible alive for our children'. The teaching of the subject now has the high level of importance required in an Anglican Aided School and the school is well placed to make further meaningful progress. Religious Education work is also displayed in the village, during occasions such as a nativity play performed around the area (complete with donkey!), using an adapted bus shelter as the stable. Work of this kind raises the profile of both the school and the subject.

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

The school is currently well led by a temporary headteacher, whose work is much appreciated by very supportive staff, governors and parents. A recent evaluation is both accurate and detailed. Much thought has been given by both governors and the Parochial Church Council as to the future of church and school and how they should be linked. A great deal of progress and re-building has been achieved over recent years, particularly as a result of the review of RE and the re-generation of support for the school; at all times the needs of all pupils has been central to this thinking. There is a lot of support for the school from parents and local community as it is perceived as being a crucial part of continuing village

life. At present governors, particularly those appointed by the foundation, do not formally evaluate what should be distinctive about their church school, nor the impact upon pupils of this status. It is well understood that this is the case and there are firm plans for this to be rectified, possibly with assistance from the Diocese of Norwich. Much will depend upon the two crucial appointments to be made to the headship and incumbency but there is no doubt regarding the commitment being shown by governors and staff towards the future of this happy and successful school.

SIAS report February 2008 Colkirk C.E. (VC) Primary School, Colkirk, Fakenham.NR21 7NW