

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Eastry Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Cooks Lea,
Eastry,
Kent,
CT13 0LR

Diocese: Canterbury

Local authority: Kent

Dates of inspection: 23rd -24th January 2007

School's unique reference number: 118685

Headteacher: Mr. Tim Halling

Inspector's name and number: David Vannerley, NS No. 329

School context

This oversubscribed Voluntary Controlled Church of England School serves a village community in rural Kent, drawing its pupils largely from the village but with some travelling from nearby Sandwich and beyond. There are 207 pupils on roll who are largely of white British origin. The recent Ofsted Section 5 inspection found the school to be good and commended the school for its clear Christian ethos. The data shows that the school is particularly good at improving the attainment of pupils whilst they attend the school.

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

Eastry Church of England Primary School is a good church school with areas of very good practice.

Established strengths

- The pastoral care of the pupils, within a Christian ethos, is positive and effective leading to good relationships and pleasure in learning.
- Acts of Collective Worship are good with appropriate planning, integrity and variety. They are clearly enjoyed and valued by the pupils and their families.
- Positive Christian values underlie the work and management of the school and there is a commitment to good relationships at all levels.

Focus for development

- In the continuing process of review of the school's policy documents the Christian values that support the policy decisions taken need to be made explicit and show a greater degree of integration with the Vision Statement.
- Further steps should be taken to develop Collective Worship so that it draws on the richness of Anglican traditions and resources. Record keeping for worship must be further developed alongside a clear process of evaluation.
- The issue of staff attendance at all acts of Worship that has been raised in previous inspections, must now be addressed.

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

Pupils feel valued in their school, speaking very warmly of it. They say they feel cared for, treated fairly and that there are appropriate ways for them to seek adult help; this is endorsed by parents. Mutual support amongst the pupils is encouraged through a buddy system that includes shared worship. The school's pastoral standards and performance are very good. The school is managed in the light of its Christian foundation; however, policy documents do not fully reflect this commitment by Head and Governors. The Vision Statement and policy documents need to be reviewed to make explicit the underlying values of the school as, for example, is done in the Pastoral Policy document. RE makes a very positive contribution to the ethos of the school providing opportunities for the pupils to reflect on their own

experience as well learning about and from religion. It promotes spiritual and cultural development amongst the pupils and is enjoyed by them. There are clear expectations laid down for the pupils' behaviour that they endorse and can describe.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Acts of Collective Worship and regular prayer during the day have a secure place in the school's life. Pupils speak positively of the worship and take part enthusiastically, singing very well and using all the opportunities to participate that are provided. Worship follows the diocesan scheme; parish clergy lead worship in the school weekly within this programme. Further work needs to be done on developing the distinctively Anglican elements of the worship. Summary records are kept but record keeping needs to be further developed with provision made for evaluation by all stakeholders. The acts of worship observed respected the integrity of the pupils and were of a good standard with some very good elements. The absence of most of the staff for most worship undermines its community aspects. It also raises issues of safety and supervision. This issue has been noted in previous inspections and must now be addressed. The worship reinforces the school's ethical standards and – importantly – is seen as fun by the pupils. It contributes to the pupils' moral understanding as well as their spiritual and cultural development. The school makes use of the parish church for its own worship six times a year. Parents welcome the opportunity to attend worship both on Fridays and on the occasions when it is held in the parish church.

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

The leadership of the school managed the inspection process in an effective and well-planned way with very good levels of preparation. The school's self evaluation was well managed by the Head with participation by most stakeholders however the Foundation Governors did not take a sufficient roll in the denominational elements of this process. Relationships within the school were seen to be positive with a commitment to a high quality of mutual concern. Pupils spoke warmly of the way that they are cared for and this view was endorsed by governors and by parents. The School Council has rotational membership and allows pupils to express their views about the school. Parents were clear that difficulties were dealt with appropriately and effectively. The level of co-operation with the parish is very good; the parish clergy are well known in the school and have a supportive role with pupils and adults. A weekly prayer meeting for the school is supported by the parish and by parents. Most of the issues raised in previous denominational inspections have now been resolved within the school.

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