

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Ecchinswell and Sydmonton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School,

Ecchinswell,
Newbury,
Berks
RG15 8UA

Diocese Winchester

LA Hampshire

Dates of inspection 28, 29, 30 November 2006

Date of last inspection 11,12 and 14 February 2003

School's Unique reference number 116285

Name of Headteacher Mrs Catharine Healy

Inspector's name with National Society inspector's number David Naylor 414

Preface

The OFSTED inspection took place on 1 and 2 November. The present Head teacher has been in post for two years.

School Context

The school has 95 pupils on roll 28 of which have special educational needs. The above average number of special needs pupils is indicative of the social and economic mix of its catchment area. The school enjoys a rural setting and the pupils are white British.

Progress Since the Last Inspection

The Section 23 inspection took place from 11 to 14 February 03. Since that time the planning of themes has been improved and staff receive guidance and advice about resources for their class based collective worship. Themes are well chosen and there is good cooperation from the incumbent and creative use of the church. Themes are reviewed and changed through collaboration and discussion without burdensome paper work. In service opportunities and work with pupils on 'Godly play' by the Diocese have been taken and found beneficial

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

Ecchinswell is a Good Church School, ably led by its headteacher. The importance of its Christian ethos is immediately apparent on entering the school. Displays of pupils' work demonstrate that there is delight in learning. Examples of pupils' prayers and writing show that the spiritual development of pupils is a central concern.

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

- The concept of forgiveness and reconciliation is central to relationships. As the Headteacher says, 'Every day is a new day'. This is equally true for the minority of pupils whose behaviour is challenging.
- Relationships are based on mutual respect. Pupils are addressed quietly and sympathetically.

- Every child is regarded as sacred. Behaviour management is non-confrontational and a sense of humour is often present in the transactions that take place between pupils and adults.
- The school has a concern for the whole child and cultivates healthy attitudes to their own bodies and to the world around them.
- The positive feedback and rejoicing in achievement of special needs pupils is indicative of a Christian theology of education which recognises that all children are created in the image of God.
Pupils have benefited from 'Godly Play' sessions provided by the Diocese. A Year 6 pupil did not want to move on to Secondary school and miss the next session.

Religious Education in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus is covered by the OFSTED inspection

The experience of worship provided by the school is good.

- Collective worship is well planned using themes and the church's year. Staff receive ideas and resource suggestions and pupils arrive for collective worship with a sense of expectation.
- Pupils experience an atmosphere of quiet reverence.
- Pupils respond positively to this atmosphere and to the carefully chosen music. As the Incumbent remarked, 'You can feel the sense of reverence'.
- All pupils are given the opportunity to respond to questions and articulate their thoughts by whispering to each other. This is an effective way of ensuring 100% participation.
- The symbol of the cross and the ritual of lighting candles is used and pupils are reminded about their significance in language accessible to them.
- Pupils' empathetic response is gained by the use of evocative pictures presented to them using the best possible professional ways of presentation.
- Aspects of collective worship both in the classroom and with the whole school have outstanding features e.g. the high level of participation, the expert use of visual presentation and the cultivation of an atmosphere of warmth and reverence. Very young children produced thoughtful and profound ideas in response to the Advent theme and were able to recall all the elements of an earlier whole school act of worship.
- Pupils benefit from their visits to the church. Several of them expressed their disappointment when the Harvest service had to be cancelled because of very heavy rain.
- The end of the week 'Celebration' collective worship is appreciated and enjoyed by pupils who are gracious in celebrating the achievements of others. Two pupils had the impression that the same 'star' pupils keep appearing and picked up a negative message about their own achievements.

Areas for Development

- Stories are used in collective worship. Their use could be extended to make some ideas, issues and visual material more accessible to the full age range.
- Questions are used well in collective worship. Some questions could be targeted to different age groups so that, for example Year 6 pupils are challenged as well as the middle and lower age range.

The leadership and management of the school as a church school are good

- The leadership challenge to the Head teacher to raise standards is being met vigorously and with a positive approach which is infectious in gaining the cooperation of all the stakeholders in the enterprise.
- That this is a Church School is apparent and pervasive. Prayers written by children are prominently displayed, Christian symbols are used and relationships with the Incumbent are excellent. As the Incumbent remarked, 'We feed off each other'
- The commitment to high standards is accompanied by more laughter than destructive stress.
- The management of the school is efficient. Much superfluous material has been removed to create a very stimulating and orderly learning environment. As the Head teacher said, 'We have removed a few skips full of junk!'
- Manageable priorities have been decided in the school development planning. They are clear and are beginning to bear fruit.
- Both leadership and management are under girded and sustained by a commitment to Gospel values.
- Monitoring of performance is efficiently carried out. Feedback from all stakeholders in the enterprise is listened to and questionnaires are used where appropriate.

SIAS report November 2006 Ecchinswell and Sydmonton Church of England
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