

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Eldersfield Lawn Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Corse Lane
Gloucestershire,
GL19 4LZ

Diocese: Worcester

LA: Worcestershire

Date of inspection: 22nd November 2007

Date of Last Inspection: 18th to 20th June 2003

Schools Unique reference number: 116807

Headteacher: Mr Paul Kilgallon

Inspectors name and number: Mrs Susan Helps 300

School context

Eldersfield Lawn Church of England primary school is a popular voluntary controlled school with 90 pupils organised in 4 classes, 3 of which are mixed age. Children from a wide area travel to the school which is the focus of a rural area community. The original building has been preserved including the chancel at the end of the school hall. Despite modern additions the school retains the intimacy of a 'Victorian small' school. It is well-organised with excellent facilities both in and outdoors.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of as a Church of England school are outstanding

Eldersfield Lawn is an outstanding school. A caring, Christian ethos pervades the school where everyone is encouraged to 'reach out' to the global community. There is a family atmosphere where children of all ages play together. The mission statement reflects a commitment to support every child's spiritual growth in an environment where everyone is encouraged to 'listen to the children'. Relationships are outstanding both among the children, staff Governors and school community. All stakeholders are encouraged to become involved in the life and development of the school. Through the organisation Comenius, Eldersfield Lawn has many links with schools around the world and through the relationships it forges, children celebrate the diversity of other faiths and cultures. The school's self-evaluation is very secure.

Established strengths

- The outstanding quality of relationships between all those connected with the school and the care and support shown within the school community;
 - The exemplary behaviour of the children, their love of learning, the Christian values they demonstrate and the Christian ethos that pervades every aspect of school life;
 - The headteacher's commitment to developing the school's Christian character and his vision to place the school at the heart of the local community while at the same 'reaching out' to the wider world;
- The quality of collective worship and the effectiveness of the teaching and learning of religious education by the staff.

Focus for development

- Purchase resources to support the teaching of religious education
- On completion of extensive building work, refurbish the chancel to enhance its potential as a focus for school and community worship.

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

Children feel safe, secure and respected in an environment where they believe that 'God is with them' and where everyone is valued i.e. the 'Gold Star' Assembly'. Learners 'love' their school and talk positively about their teachers. They are able to articulate Christian values i.e. "Laws for life", written as part of an RE lesson. The school council representatives clearly understood the Christian character of their school where they were encouraged to forgive misdemeanours. Throughout the school, despite major building work, displays celebrate the school's Christian character. A display headed 'God Knows Me' in class 2 and a display of icons alongside children's own attempts at religious paintings and children's own 'commandments'. Every class has a holding cross which is used informally by the children to stimulate prayer or as a source of comfort. The school's inclusive, outward looking philosophy ensures all the children have a good knowledge of many different world faiths. They understand the many similarities and differences between Christianity and other religions for example in an RE lesson on rites of passage. The school has close links with schools in Europe and supports charities throughout the school year. The school hall and chancel are used for family services where there are regularly large congregations.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship occupies a vital part of the daily life of all learners and occupies a vital part of the daily life of all learners. The whole staff are wholly committed to supporting school based worship and there are clear aims that link to developing the spiritual, social and emotional well-being of the children. Worship is planned around themes that are broadly Christian, but also include other world faiths and there is a clear structure. Each member of staff takes worship for a whole week and this enables them to present a complete entity, evaluate each stage of the worship and receive feedback from the children. The children referred to the central 'message' of assemblies which they could clearly link to the hymn and music used. Children could explain the inherent 'message' of the worship observed very clearly and when singing the hymn all the children were enthusiastic both in singing and with actions. The children clearly enjoyed coming together and many said that they would miss assemblies if they didn't take place. One youngster stated that 'without assemblies we wouldn't be a school'. The worship had a calm atmosphere and children listened attentively to a poem intended to provoke a response. The worship was reflective and thought provoking, indeed some of the children related the emotion provoked by the poem in their RE lesson later in the day when writing their own 'values list' for a Jewish scroll. A member of staff supports the musical development of the children by playing the piano as part of the worship as well as teaching new hymns. The school hall was attractively arranged with bright displays that acted as the focus for worship. The candle was used to focus the children and an impressive silence prevailed. A Psalm was read as the prayer and the children had a good knowledge of the Lord's Prayer. In questionnaire evidence the spiritual growth of the children was evident in the different responses from children across the school. The Victorian chancel at the end of the school hall provides the school with an excellent facility to 'promote' worship and the school makes excellent use the space both on school days and for Sunday services. The vicar leads regular services and has been an inspiration to the head teacher and staff. The foundation governor supports the staff and headteacher with the development of his vision for the school as an all embracing 'Christian' school.

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

The headteacher has a clear vision of the development of a Christian school that nurtures all learners. The headteacher, vicar and foundation governor strongly support the Christian ethos of the school. One foundation governor spoke of the high standards of behaviour and care shown by the children. The vicar is a regular visitor to the school who also leads worship for the staff and children. The views of all stakeholders are sought regularly i.e. questionnaires to parents and school council meetings with direct action resulting from this consultation. School documentation and policies promote the school's Christian status and

both RE and collective worship schemes are thorough, well planned and effectively funded. All staff lead worship and have shared the role of RE subject leadership while their colleague subject leader has been away from school. Individual staff commitment to the mission statement is evident in the highly effective RE planning of the year 3 and 4 teacher where a scheme of work under themes included an excellent ICT presentation. Despite disruption caused by building work the school routine, the children's behaviour and the staff morale was impressive. The staff team work together to promote the school's Christian ethos and all staff feel valued by the school leadership and provide mutual support across the whole team for example through the school team building event. They provide excellent Christian role models for learners and the close relationships they have facilitate ongoing informal evaluation of the school's Christian status. An excellent partnership has developed across the parish with joint events and the sharing of school facilities.

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