

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Erpingham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

School Road

Erpingham

NR11 7QY

Diocese of Norwich

Local authority: Norfolk

Dates of inspection: 11th March 2008

Date of last inspection: 11th & 25th March 2004

School's unique reference number: 291968

Headteacher: Deborah Leahy

Inspector's name and number: Marika Mears 28

School Context

Erpingham VC Primary School is a very small primary school serving an isolated rural community. The 20 pupils are taught in two classes, the Head Teacher sharing a significant teaching responsibility for one of these. There is high pupil mobility, with few remaining at the school for the whole of their primary phase education. The Head Teacher has been in post for two years, during which time a new classroom has been added and other building improvements completed. All pupils are of White British heritage.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Erpingham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

Christian values and attitudes are embedded in the school's mission statement, which is rooted in fairness, justice, honesty and respect. The current Head Teacher and Governing Body are implementing this vision effectively and the school's ethos is now clearly Christian.

Established Strengths

- The secure and caring Christian ethos promoted by the Head Teacher, staff team and Governing Body, which ensures outstanding relationships between staff and pupils.
- The dedication of the Head Teacher and staff team to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment which promotes the Christian ethos.
- The very strong relationship between the Head Teacher, Governing Body, local Vicar and the wider community.

Focus for Development

- Raise the profile of Collective Worship within the school community by increasing the involvement of staff, pupils and the Governing Body.
- Ensure that the visible evidence of the Christian ethos and values is clear in all school documentation.
- Devise and implement ways of recording the progress of pupils' spiritual development.

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

Pupils recognise and speak with great pride about the excellent standard and quality of care shown by the teaching and non-teaching staff. Pupils speak of feeling valued and being able to make a positive contribution to school life. For example, pupils are involved in looking after the school grounds and library, they have drawn up a code of conduct for all in the school community and they support various charities. School and individual achievements are

regularly celebrated. The local community are invited to these events where pupils talk about their work and share their successes.

The school has successfully developed an outdoor learning environment through its "Forest School" approach. Experiences such as raft building and the use of natural materials have a great impact upon co-operation as well as spiritual development. Pupils develop Christian values and talk about the natural world, applying their ideas and skills in other areas of school life. The school prides itself in respecting the religious beliefs of all members of the school community. Religious education is integrated into the themed approach to the curriculum: this enables pupils to apply their faith based moral values when learning about other world issues and cultures. For example pupils talk about their learning related to Fair Trade in terms of fairness, taking advantage of poor people, equality of opportunity and a feeling of sadness that more cannot be done to promote Fair Trade.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.

Despite the restricted space, great care is taken to ensure that Collective Worship takes place in a peaceful environment. Worship has a strong Christian focus and provides opportunities for reflection, praise and spiritual development. Visitors are used to enrich the learners' experience. These include the local incumbent and members of the wider community. Careful plans are made for Collective Worship, which include all the main events in the Church year. It is planned that pupils, staff and Governors will be involved to a greater extent in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of the impact of Collective Worship.

Prayer is a key part of Collective Worship as well as taking place at other times in the school day. Pupils are familiar with the Lord's Prayer, the School Prayer and other prayers. During Collective Worship children are attentive and participate enthusiastically, particularly in singing and responding to questions. The theme and content of Collective Worship ensures that pupils focus on Christian values, which are evident in their excellent behaviour and relationships around the school.

Parents confirm that pupils talk about Collective Worship themes at home and are confident to discuss the way in which this impacts on their daily lives. Acts of Worship are also held in the local Church at key points in the Christian calendar, such as Palm Sunday, Harvest and Christmas. These services are well attended by the local community and highly praised by those who attend.

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

The Head Teacher has accurately assessed the school's strengths and identified areas for improvement. She has developed the Mission Statement with the Governing Body, emphasising the school's Christian foundation and key values and attitudes. She has implemented her vision with enthusiasm and passion, ably supported by a very collegiate staff team. There are plans to further develop the Christian aspects of the school as seen in the Religious Character Action Plan. The Governing Body plan to ensure that all school documentation reflects its Christian foundation and proclaims the success of the school. The staff feel valued and well supported, particularly the Newly Qualified Teacher, and are very positive about the leadership. There is an excellent collaborative team spirit at the school. Staff work very hard to enhance the learning opportunities for pupils with interactive displays and a carefully planned curriculum. The Head Teacher and adults are very good role models and provide direction for the high expectations of behaviour, care, respect and Christian values that characterise the school. The Governing Body are supportive of the school leadership and talk about the evident commitment of the Head Teacher and staff to the further development of the school. The school supports local and international charities and enjoys the goodwill of the local Church and community. Community members feel that the village "comes alive through the work of the school" and they are clearly very proud of it. When the school was threatened with closure, the village community fought to ensure its survival, recognising its value in bringing together the community at Church services, school

celebrations and concerts.

SIAS report March 2008, Erpingham VC Primary School, School Road, ERPINGHAM,
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