

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Esher Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Milbourne Lane

Esher

Surrey

KT10 9DU

Diocese: Guildford

Local authority: Surrey

Dates of inspection: 22 January 2008

Date of previous inspection: October 2003

School's unique reference number: 125177

Headteacher: Mr. Alex Tear

Inspector's name and number: The Revd A Fiddian-Green (NSI 383)

School context

Esher Church of England Primary School serves an area which government statistics report as having a high level of prosperity. The school is central to four parishes and admission criteria require the majority of families to be Church based. Almost all pupils are of white/British heritage and only a very few have English as an additional language. Pupils' attainment is above local and national averages on entry to the school. Children are well motivated and receive full support from their parents, who take an active part in their education. The recent OFSTED report described the school as outstanding.

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

Esher Church of England primary school is an outstanding Church school with a very strong Christian ethos, that spreads throughout all aspects of school life. This is due to the Christian focus, leadership and commitment of the head teacher and the staff. Strong links with the parish church and the help of other local churches also help this outstanding school to offer the Christian message through its daily life.

Established strengths

- The displays, reflection corners and prayer station at the entrance enrich and emphasise the excellent Christian ethos very well.
- Religious education is outstanding.
- Collective worship and the links to local churches are strengths of the school.
- Leadership and management are outstanding.

Focus for development

- To further develop awareness of multi-cultural issues by linking to an overseas school.

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

Esher Church of England Primary School is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners, and this commitment is shared by the whole school community. All are treated with respect and there is a happy, welcoming and secure atmosphere. Displays and presentations round the school are of a very high standard and are excellent reminders of its Christian foundation. For example, there is a prayer table in the entrance hall where pupils can record their prayer requests, and it is fully used.

Pupils are valued and challenged very well so that expectations for good behaviour and high

standards of work are very evident. They are taught to use reflection time with respect, and during worship time they are all quiet and focused when the candle is alight. Parents are very appreciative of what the school does to provide for their children, and they value the Christian foundation of the school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding and through the school's active work about reflection, spiritual development is particularly strong both in worship and in classes. Respect is a watchword of the school and pupils help one another and show respect to adults. A sense of responsibility to others is strong and is based upon Christian principles. Above all, children are happy to be at school and enjoy their education. The school recognises individual needs and treats them sensitively. Pupils all know one another well, and are known to the adults. In this way the school community provides a strong, caring family ethos.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The impact of collective worship is outstanding and it features strongly in the school day. Pupils are very appreciative of their worship times and speak very positively about them. In particular, they understand the concept of reflection very well and speak of looking back, using a peaceful time to think things through. This is a strong feature of the school's worship as well as being an integral part of many religious education lessons. Collective worship has a firm Biblically founded Christian focus, and times such as Christmas, Lent, Easter and Pentecost are celebrated in the school and also in the church, so that the Anglican calendar is well known and used.

Pupils sing with enthusiasm, doing the actions to some hymns and songs and using a range of sources, some traditional and some modern. Pupils are very well behaved and attentive in worship and they are frequently actively involved through helping with music, the screen presentations and prayers. They join in question and answer sessions with enthusiasm. The Rector is fully involved with planning and leads worship regularly as do other local clergy. A school eucharist is planned as part of the Easter celebrations. A candle and the cross are used as the focus for worship and reflection, and there is a school prayer as well as prayers sometimes contributed by pupils themselves. Planning is good. For example over the Pentecost season it is planned to use the fruits of the Spirit as worship themes.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Religious Education is outstanding in this church school. The school follows the Guildford Diocesan guidelines and pupils learn about other faiths as well as Christianity. Pupils speak knowledgeably about their lessons and their books show a good grasp of the topics, leading to above average attainment in general. Teachers' planning is excellent and allows for lessons to cover not just the facts of the theme but also adds time for understanding and reflection. An excellent example was seen when two Year 2 pupils talked to the class about how they have resolved a long standing 'falling out' following a lesson about the Good Samaritan. The co-ordinator has worked outstandingly to plan the subject and this is reflected in the good resources, her monitoring of lesson plans and pupils' work, and some monitoring of teaching and learning. Challenge and pace are very good. Assessment provides pupils with clear understanding of what they must do next. The whole programme provides knowledge and understanding of other faiths including Hinduism and Islam as well as the appropriate priority given to Christianity. Pupils make very good progress and are confident in speaking about their learning. It clearly makes an outstanding contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, especially the time allowed for reflection.

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

The leadership and management of the school as a Church school are outstanding. The headteacher's well thought out leadership is integral to the success of the school and he demonstrates a clear commitment to the Christian nature of the school community. He is supported by a staff also committed to Christian principles. In addition, religious education has outstanding leadership and management from a knowledgeable and committed co-

ordinator. There is clear understanding of the strands required in religious education and the whole subject is planned outstandingly well. The governors are very active in supporting the school, monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and acting as a critical friend. The headteacher and governors have an excellent and fruitful relationship with the local church community who support the school in many ways.

The school has good links with the Diocese and attends services in the Cathedral, and there are good contacts with other local churches. Parents are appreciative of all the school does and like the distinctive Christian ethos that the school offers.

The school is very good at self-review, and consulting and asking all concerned, pupils and parents alike, for their views on a variety of aspects of school life. In this way there is a strong partnership and the way forward is taken together.

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