

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

The Ferncumbe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

The Green
Hatton
Warwick
CV35 7EX

Diocese:	Coventry
Local authority:	Warwickshire
Dates of inspection:	13 th June 2007
Date of last inspection:	2002
School's unique reference number:	125687
Headteacher:	Chris Edmonds
Inspector's name and number:	Alan Thornsby 137

School context

Ferncumbe School is a smaller than average school that has increased in size over recent years. It is dear to the hearts of the local church community because they successfully challenged the closure of the school to become the only church school in the area. The school has benefited from the appointment of a new head and deputy who are committed to developing the school further.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ferncumbe School as a Church of England school are good.

Ferncumbe is a good school because of the immediate impact of the headteacher in creating a safe and caring learning environment in which pupils are happy to learn. Care and compassion for others are central to the school's work as are the links between the local church community and school.

Established strengths

- The impact of headteacher in giving a clear focus to raise expectations of whole school community
- The personal development of pupils and their commitment to helping others charity fundraising
- The relationships throughout school and its community
- The links between the school and church

Focus for development

- To explore and articulate the meaning of distinctiveness to inform school development
- Develop a long term overview for worship themes and develop monitoring and evaluation of worship
- Extend pupils awareness and experience of British multi-cultural society

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

The school has a family like ethos that enables pupils and their achievements to be known by everyone. Parents recognise and describe the ethos as 'Christian based to underpin good moral values. These are reinforced for children of all faiths and none.' Relationships throughout the school, church and village communities are very strong. In a short space of time the curriculum has been successfully redesigned to raise the expectations of everyone and to reflect a relevant and unique learning environment for all learners. Creative thinking skills have successfully been introduced to further develop the ideas of pupils. Thus pupils enjoy their learning and are very aware of being safe in school. They describe the school as 'being very good because it teaches you everything.' Pupils are encouraged in their learning

because learning objectives are shared with them and positive affirmation posters and class rules reinforce the learning environment. Pupils and staff respond initially to learning by using 'traffic lights'. Pupils are confident and friendly and readily take responsibility for younger pupils. They enjoy sharing their work and asking questions at home. Links with schools and charities abroad extend the awareness and compassion of pupils for others less fortunate than themselves. However, the school has rightly identified the need to increase the pupils' awareness of the multicultural nature of British society, to develop a more accurate picture of global issues.

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

This is because of the way worship draws together the whole school to consolidate the shared values of the Ferncumbe family. There is a range of leaders, including all staff, that give pupils a variety of worshipping experiences and the presence of staff ensure messages from worship can be revisited during the day. Although there is no overall planning outline, and the policy is about to be reviewed, individual acts of worship based on the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning Project are well planned, using PowerPoint presentations. These include a focus picture or text to engage pupils as they enter the hall to create a suitable reflective atmosphere. Music chosen by staff encourages a calm entry into worship and a poster reminds pupils of effect of their words on others. Worship engages pupils by the use of personal anecdotes by the leader, the links made to the experiences of pupils and Bible stories. Pupils readily contribute answers to questions. They speak of the value of worship as the time to learn about other people and Jesus. The youngest pupils are able to describe the significance of a lighted candle being lit 'to show Jesus is with us,' and they recognise His presence after the candle is extinguished. They have a good understanding of and accurately talk about the church year. They describe the significance of prayer as being able to 'communicate with God and say thank you.' The impact of worship on pupils and the extent of their compassion is well illustrated by the practical example of three pupils who, after an assembly by a local visitor about the Cotton Tree Trust, donated their own tuck shop money, collected from staff and other pupils before organising a table top sale to raise more funds for the charity.

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

Since her appointment in September 2006, the headteacher has inspired the staff to raise expectations for pupils by establishing a successful team approach to a climate for change. This includes a revision of curriculum and acknowledgement of the entitlement of pupils during their time at Ferncumbe. The head provides a role model for others to follow in her daily life in the school. Foundation governors are instrumental in bringing church into school through their work with pupils in 'Young at Heart', a group that involves community members of all ages, as well as supporting the schools' Christian foundation. Parents acknowledge the open door policy of the school and are aware of the benefits recent changes and developments have made to the school. Although Christian foundations are securely embedded within the school's practice, there has been no formal evaluation of the Christian character of the school. The school has a good capacity for further improvement. The school has good links with five local parish churches and it is part of the entitlement of every child to visit each one during their time in school. Links with Holy Trinity are mutually beneficial. The school visits church for festival services and to sing in Family services that are planned by a group including the headteacher. A recent service in church called for the congregation to volunteer to help good causes. This resulted in a member of the church music group helping with the school choir, and another offering to give talks on birds and wildlife.