

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Fressingfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Stradbroke Road

Fressingfield

Eye

IP21 5PR

Diocese of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich

LA: Suffolk

Date of inspection: 28 April 2008

Date of last inspection: July 2003

School's unique reference number: 124731

Name of Headteacher: Stephen Rutter

Name of Inspector: Simon Windmill 182

Context

Fressingfield Church of England VC primary school serves the villages of Fressingfield, Metfield and Weybread. It has links with its parish church and two other local churches, and the number of active church members is high. Almost all pupils come from white British backgrounds. The number of pupils with disabilities or learning difficulties is below average.

Summary Judgement

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

The school's Christian ethos and values are embedded in school life and have a strong positive influence on pupils' values and attitudes. The supportive and caring relationships within and between pupils and staff are excellent.

Established strengths

- The excellent caring and supportive relationships, which reflect the school's Christian values
- The links with the local Anglican, Baptist and Methodist churches
- Pupils' excellent behaviour

Focus for development

- Review Collective Worship to ensure that all pupils have opportunities to derive inspiration and affirmation from it
- Work with staff and governors to develop guidance on how to foster pupils' spiritual growth across the whole curriculum
- Develop systems to record, monitor and evaluate the impact of Collective Worship on pupils

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

The school's Christian ethos is regarded by the headteacher, staff and governors as a fundamentally important part of school life. Care and support for pupils and staff are outstanding, and reflect the Christian values on which the school is based. This is seen in the school's warm, welcoming, inclusive and friendly atmosphere, in which pupils feel valued and safe.

Parents' surveys confirm this, with comments such as 'My daughter is flourishing...this is down to the fantastic patience of staff', and 'Fressingfield is a nurturing and supportive school. My children are lucky to attend.' Pupils get on exceptionally well with each other, and with the staff, who provide good role models. These excellent relationships help pupils develop self-confidence and independence. Pupils like coming to school, and enjoy their lessons.

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They respect and obey the school rules, and lapses in good behaviour are minor and extremely rare, and are always dealt with quickly and effectively.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong. Multicultural days are held jointly with neighbouring schools, for example exploring the celebration of Divali and the Chinese New Year.

The school environment is used well to contribute to pupils' spiritual and moral development. For example the Headteacher shared the excitement of a pupil who was watching tadpoles. Excellent displays throughout the school include pupils' work on how they saw heaven, and there is always an open Bible on display. A memorial garden was created following a bereavement, and is now also used as a place for quiet reflection.

Pupils' awareness and concern for the needs of others is encouraged, and they help to raise money for charitable causes. They are very aware of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles. They enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

The impact of Collective Worship on the school community is good.

Collective Worship is good. It is seen as an important part of school life by the head and staff, and is based on Christian values. It always includes good singing, teaching and one of the school prayers, written by pupils, prayer and reflection. Pupils are invited to participate in prayer by saying Amen or through quiet reflection.

Focal points for worship are used by some worship leaders. Pupils see Collective Worship as a special part of the day, which they enjoy, especially when they have a part to play in it, such as acting out a story or helping the leader. A prayer tree is sometimes used. The Anglican tradition is sometimes represented by using the Lord's Prayer instead of the school's own prayers. Pupils have a well developed understanding of the range of styles and purposes of prayer, such as 'saying thank you', 'asking for help' and 'saying sorry'. They would welcome even more involvement in worship, for example by writing or reading their own prayers.

Worship is well planned around themes that reflect the main festivals of the Church year, such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest, along with a number of other 'special' services such as a service for those leaving the school. Many of these services are held in the Churches, with the active support of church members. This support provides good role models for staff members who may feel less confident in leading worship.

The school has identified a need to further develop systems for recording, monitoring and evaluating Collective Worship in order to assess its impact on pupils

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

The Headteacher gives good leadership to the school, and is very well supported by the staff and governors. Foundation governors contribute well to the life of the school, and visit to help with Collective Worship and 'keep their fingers on the pulse' of the school's activities. Leaders from all three churches lead Collective Worship regularly, bringing a variety of worship styles.

The high level of active church members from the local community supports the headteacher and staff in promoting a distinctive Christian vision for the school, with Christian values underpinning its life and work. Staff and governors have been considering whether it would be appropriate to raise the profile of the school's Christian identity, for example by updating the school's signs and documents to give more emphasis to the school's status.

The staff feel highly valued and involved in the school's development. They all work together exceptionally well, and support each other in their work. This contributes greatly to the happy and supportive atmosphere of the school. The staff and governors have undertaken training for Collective Worship to further develop their skills and knowledge, and this has a positive impact on the school's work

The partnership between the school, the church and the wider community is very good, and highly valued by all. Links with the three Churches are particularly close, and school services are sometimes held in them. The school has had good pastoral care from the outgoing Vicar, but other church members will take this role over.

Questionnaires, surveys, and informal conversations confirm that parents and members of the wider community hold the school in very high regard. They show that they are very happy with the school and feel that the successful and purposeful atmosphere is generated through the school's caring Christian relationships.

The school's self assessment is largely accurate, and provides a good basis for further developments.