

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### Great Casterton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Pickworth Road  
Great Casterton  
Stamford  
Lincolnshire  
PE9 4AU

<b>Diocese:</b>	<b>Peterborough</b>
Local authority:	Rutland
Dates of inspection:	11 <sup>th</sup> March 2008
Date of last inspection:	February 2001
School's unique reference number:	120185
Head teacher:	Mrs Clare Rowbotham
Inspector's name and number:	Mr R.Y. McNulty 188

#### School context

This is a small primary school with 64 pupils divided into three classes. Children come from the catchment area and also from the neighbouring area. The proportion of children with learning difficulties is below the national average. Most of the children are from White British ethnic origin. The head teacher has been in post since January 2006. The school is federated with Empingham VC Church of England Primary School sharing head teacher, subject leaders, and governing body. They have a common management structure and curriculum. Children visit Empingham school for certain lessons.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Great Casterton CE VC Primary school as a Church of England school are good.**

The distinctiveness and effectiveness as a Church of England school are evident in its focus on worship and commitment to promoting pupils' spiritual development. There are good links between the school and the local parish church.

#### Established strengths

- Relationships between all members of the school community are very good and promote the pupils' social and moral development.
- Pupils take a full and active part in collective worship in which there is relevant and meaningful prayer and reflection through which the children's spirituality is encouraged and developed.
- The head teacher and chair of governors, promote the distinctive Christian character of the school.

#### Focus for development

- Formalise the monitoring and evaluating procedure for the Christian dimension of the school's life.
- Create a multicultural educational policy.

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

The school makes excellent provision to meet the needs of all its learners through its strong Christian ethos. The head, governors and parents all stress that Christian values underpin all that takes place in the school. The moral, social and cultural education is excellent. The majority of learners do well and fulfil their potential. Relationships between staff and pupils are very effective and children feel safe, secure, happy and confident. When an issue does arise it is handled effectively and compassionately. They feel that they are valued and understood. Pupils relate well to each other and are happy to

help and encourage their peers in a sensitive manner. When I asked why they behaved in this way one child said that it was because this was a Christian School and this was the way Christian's behaved. Both pupils and staff expressed pride in their school.

The chair of governors is actively involved in visiting the school and in supporting the head teacher, there is a link governor for collective worship and religious education and two foundation governors.

Parents' views have been sought by means of questionnaires, those to whom I spoke were very pleased with the caring attitude of the head and staff, who were considered to be very approachable. They stated that the ethos of the school was based on Christian principles. In the school hall there is a large cross on one wall, the Lord's prayer is prominently displayed as is the school prayer. There is a display focussing the children's attention on a child who had died from cancer, the school is supporting a charity that was started following her death. Pupils' RE work is in evidence in classrooms in wall displays. Pupils enjoy the subject and learn from it. Through its RE teaching the school ensures that the children learn about different religions and cultures as well as Christianity. Children spoke enthusiastically about a recent project on Jamaica, also work on Hinduism. The environment is used to encourage awe and wonder.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Worship occupies a very important place in school life. The collective worship policy has been planned by the head teacher. A folder is produced for the start of each term which includes a summary of each act of worship backed up by useful resource material.

The excellent singing of the children enhances worship. There is good participation by pupils in worship including drama and reading, time is given for quiet reflection.

The collective worship observed, which took place in the hall, included a talk related to the children's experience and was enhanced by careful questioning, a bible reading, singing, reflection and prayer with the use of a candle as a focus. The children came in quietly and their behaviour was good. They responded well to questions. The children were encouraged to reflect on the subject discussed. Key Stage 2 children remained behind at the end and the subject was discussed in greater detail.

Parents join the children in school for celebration assemblies and also at services held in the church at Christmas and other festivals. Children recently attended Peterborough Cathedral for Candlemas which they discussed with enthusiasm.

Acts of worship are taken by members of staff, and the vicar. Children stated that they enjoyed and learnt from collective worship, they were able to give examples of how the Christian teaching had an effect on their lives. In discussion with me they demonstrated a deep and developing spirituality.

Prayer is a natural part of the life of the school. The children spoke naturally about their involvement in prayers both formally and informally. The Lord's Prayer is used and its meaning is explained to the children. Worship is recognisably Christian. The vicar helps the school to ensure that the Anglican tradition is reflected in worship through the use of prayer and the celebration of festivals of the church year.

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

The head teacher works hard to move the school forward. Her clear vision for the school is based on sound Christian principles which are clearly expressed in the mission statement. Her leadership contributes significantly to the success of the school. This vision is taken forward by all of the staff working together. The chair of governors together with other governors visit the school and help to assess what is happening. The governing body are planning to develop formal procedures for monitoring the school as a church school. The staff, children and parents feel valued and secure. Parents and pupils speak positively of the Christian ethos of the school grounded in love and concern for each other. New parents are left in no doubt that this is a Christian school through public documents such as the school brochure.