

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Great Waldingfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled School

Folly Road
Great Waldingfield
CO10 0RR

Diocese of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich

LA: Suffolk

Date of inspection: 12 June 2008

Date of last inspection: September 2003

School's unique reference number: 124699

Name of Headteacher: Angie Jones

Name of Inspector: Simon Windmill

NS number: 182

Context

Great Waldingfield Church of England VC primary school serves the village and area of Great Waldingfield, with about half the children coming from outside the village. It has links with its parish church. 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 Great Waldingfield as a Church of England school are outstanding.

The school's Christian ethos has a strong positive influence on pupils' values and attitudes. Pupil personal development is excellent. Supportive and caring relationships give the school a family atmosphere which is evident to all.

Established strengths

- Christian values underpin the life and work of the school
- Excellent caring and supportive relationships with and between pupils, staff and governors
- Church and community links

Focus for development

- Establishing stronger links between families, church and school
- Introducing the new 'Flipping Praise' material to support collective worship
- Giving pupils even more opportunities to say their own prayers and help lead worship

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

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, and one parent wrote 'I came to faith in Christ through my children's involvement with the school.' 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 and friendships.

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Class rules are agreed between pupils and staff, so they know what is expected of them, and lapses in good behaviour are usually minor and rare, and are always dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong.

The school environment is used well to contribute to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Excellent displays throughout the school reflect the school's Christian ethos. Pupils' awareness and concern for the needs of others is encouraged, and they help to raise money for charitable causes, such as supporting a school in Tanzania and contributing to the 'Shoebox' appeal. Pupils are very aware of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles, and they enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

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

Collective worship is central to the school's life. Pupils see collective worship as a special part of the day, which they enjoy. It is soundly based on Christian values, and always includes singing, Bible-based teaching and prayer. A display and a lit candle provide a focal point for worship, and pupils have opportunities for quiet prayer or reflection. They also have opportunities to play a part in worship, such as acting out a story or helping the leader in other ways. They would welcome even more opportunities to participate, such as reading their own prayers.

Pupils have an exceptionally well developed understanding of the range of styles and purposes of prayer, such as saying thank you, asking for help, saying sorry, seeking forgiveness, and asking for healing. The school is trialling a new diocesan resource, 'Flipping Praise', which aims to involve pupils more fully in collective worship. Pupils are familiar with Anglican greetings and the Lord's Prayer which are used in worship.

Worship is exceptionally well planned around themes that reflect the main festivals of the church year, such as Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and Harvest, along with a number of other 'special' services such as a service for those leaving the school. Some of these services are held in the church, with the active support of a good number of church members, both ordained and lay. The school also invites 'mums and grannies' for a Mothers' Day tea party, and holds a celebration for 'dads' on the afternoon nearest to Fathers' Day.

The school has implemented a good system for recording, monitoring and evaluating collective worship in order to assess its impact on pupils. Staff, governors and pupils contribute to this evaluation. Links with the church are very good and productive - for example the governors meet with the Parochial Church Council to pray for the school and sustain close links with each other.

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

The Headteacher gives outstanding leadership to the school, and is very well supported by the staff and governors. The foundation governor and the vicar make a good contribution to the church related aspects of the life of the school, such as monitoring collective worship and leading assemblies. Other local clergy, lay ministers and church members also make a good contribution to school life in various ways, such as pastoral and prayer support.

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 partnership between the school, the church and the wider community is very good, and highly valued by all. The school is used once a month by a local community church, bringing a contemporary style of worship to complement the Anglican worship provided by the parish church.

Pupils benefit from a number of Christian organisations which support the school, for example a counselling service, the NVision youth worker and team brings contemporary worship, the Noise group brings singing to community events, with Youth for Christ and Rock Solid also adding further Christian dimensions to the school and community. The school runs the 'Prunes and Custard' club, where community members are invited to share a roast dinner with the pupils. Old and young share the enjoyment of this weekly event.

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 accurate self-evaluation provides a sound basis for further improvements.