

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Hartwell Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

School Lane
Hartwell
Northampton
NN7 2HL

Diocese: Peterborough

Local authority: Northamptonshire
Dates of inspection: 25th September 2006
Date of last inspection: 13th November 2000
School's unique reference number: 121977
Headteacher: Mrs Jayne Clancy
Inspector's name and number: Nigel Pett 157

School context

This primary school is located in a rural setting and is smaller than average. The headteacher was appointed in 2004. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average, as is the children's attainment when they start school. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and all are fluent English speakers.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Hartwell Primary School as a Church of England school are good

This is an inclusive school where every pupil is valued within a Christian ethos. Pupils' personal and academic growth is very well supported through high expectations and a balanced and stimulating curriculum. Pupils respond well and their achievement is outstanding. The leadership and management are effective and accurately evaluate that more can be done to emphasise the distinctiveness of the school's Christian mission.

Established strengths

- Pupils are valued, known and treated as individuals so that they develop their potential in a Christian context.
- Academic achievement and standards are outstanding.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are exemplary.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported especially through the good opportunities given for reflection.
- Leadership and management are effective and well distributed and shared by the headteacher, staff, governors, and pupils.
- Parents and carers are very supportive and involved in school life.

Focus for development

- The use of symbols and displays to provide pupils with a greater awareness of their significance to support their spiritual development.
- The monitoring of the pupils' response to collective worship and religious education to evaluate how it supports their spiritual growth and affirmation of their faith
- The review of the school's mission statement, prospectus and policies so that they clearly demonstrate the school's Christian foundation and practice

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

The school lives a Christian gospel in helping all pupils to do their best and develop their personal and academic skills. The pupils' academic and personal development is well tracked so that they are very well supported if they encounter difficulties. Because each child is known and valued, and through the effective teaching and learning, outstanding qualities are found in pupils' high academic achievement especially in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy which prepare them well for their future education. They really enjoy coming to school, enjoy their learning, and their attitudes and behaviour are exemplary. Relationships between pupils and with staff are very good and pupils respond very well to the high expectations of treating each other fairly. They work well together in group and pair work but also understand that they have to take responsibility for their own work and actions, which they do very well. Pupils feel safe in school and are proud of their school. The wide opportunities which pupils experience in their learning are very visible in the high quality displays of their work. This provision helps them develop their moral, social and cultural understanding very well. Many pupils are confident in seeking support and supporting each other through a clear code of Christian values. Pupils make good progress in their spiritual awareness, which is well supported through their work in religious education, and relate well to the beliefs, values and feelings of each other. They gain a good understanding of other world faiths and the influence these beliefs and practices have on the followers' everyday lives. Lessons give pupils the opportunity to reflect on their work, as seen in a Year 6 lesson where work on the personal attributes of characters portrayed by Shakespeare really helped them to understand what it is to be evil, devious and selfish. Whilst there is a very good area where pupils may sit quietly when they wish to, the school recognises that it needs to develop through symbols and displays a greater awareness amongst pupils of their significance to support their spiritual development.

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

The well-designed and effectively planned collective worship is of a broadly Christian character and reflects key times in the church year. It values the traditions and beliefs of other faith groups and supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Collective worship and assemblies are well supported by the staff, governors, parents and the incumbent, with some worship taking place in the church. Pupils respect the fact that worship takes place in a special environment and behave well. They enjoy the themes, willingly contributing their answers and ideas to what are good teaching sessions well suited to their ages. Older pupils listen well to readings and younger pupils enjoy acting out stories, and they all show as they answer teachers' questions that they have made satisfactory gains in their knowledge and understanding. Pupils respond well when asked to reflect on the worship themes, and they show by the points that they make that they are thinking through and developing their values and beliefs. They sing hymns and songs, well chosen to support the themes, sensibly and with enjoyment. Prayer is well used in assemblies, in class and before lunch, and pupils gain well in their understanding of the awe and wonder of God's world. Classes enjoy the opportunity to plan and take their own and whole school assemblies, and to write their prayers. However, there is not enough use of symbols, such as a lighted candle or an open Bible, to help pupils to focus on their worship. In discussion with pupils they relate aspects of the themes they have followed but they are less secure in showing how worship inspires their spiritual growth and affirmation, or develops their understanding of Anglican practice, such as the Eucharist. Evaluation of the impact of collective worship amongst pupils is underdeveloped and the school recognizes that this is a crucial element of the good work which has begun with the School Council to involve the pupils in decision making. Equally, it needs to consult parents and other stakeholders to evaluate the impact.

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

The self-evaluation of the school's distinctiveness and effectiveness as a church school is accurate. The strengths, and areas listed for development, are all recognized by its leaders. Through this effective leadership and management Christian values are well established and permeate all aspects of school life. Since her appointment in 2004 the headteacher has set

out a clear vision for the school and has rightly planned to ensure that pupils achieve the high standards in their subjects. The school development plan is very well structured and is now more focused on the development of the Christian life of the school. The pace of improvement has been good. The headteacher, staff and governors work well together and are successful in providing a distinctive Christian ethos. Religious education is managed effectively so that pupils achieve as well in it as in other subjects. Policies for collective worship and religious education have recently been reviewed and accepted by the governors, and they are effective documents. However, the policy on collective worship does not adequately clarify how it will be monitored and evaluated. Good links exist with the local church and wider links with the diocese are satisfactory. The school's denominational status and its vision are communicated through its prospectus but there is not always adequate reference or illustration as to the Christian influence in documentation. Nevertheless, staff and governors share the Christian values on which the school is based and as they act them out and set high expectations the pupils and parents respond very well. Parents and the local community speak positively of the school's Christian ethos, and readily appreciate that the school enables its pupils to grow well personally and achieve high standards in their work. The school seeks and evaluates the views of parents and involves them well in many aspects of school life which supports pupils' personal development very well. The recently introduced School Council is rightly seen as a means to develop the roles of pupils in measuring the impact of the school's Christian ethos, especially collective worship and religious education, on their spiritual growth and affirmation.

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