

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Hockering Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

The Street
Hockering
Norwich
Norfolk
NR20 3HN

Diocese: Norwich

Local authority: Norfolk
Dates of inspection: 19th and 20th March 2008
Date of last inspection: 21st October 2003
School's unique reference number: 121094
Headteacher: Mr Mike Long
Inspector's name : Mr Thomas Green

School context

Hockering Primary is a much smaller than average school with 26 pupils on roll and serves the village and the surrounding area. Children enter Reception with knowledge and skills that are broadly typical of young children nationally. A similar proportion of pupils have learning difficulties as in most schools in the country. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than in most schools nationally. All pupils are White British and their first language is English.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Hockering Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary as a Church of England school are satisfactory

The school effectively draws together the social, educational and organisational aspects of school life within an atmosphere of Christian distinctiveness. The headteacher leads a committed team where the rights of all are respected and their responsibilities understood. Pupils enjoy school and demonstrate Christian virtues of care, kindness and tolerance. The school seeks to promote partnership with the local church and the community. There is a recognition that the school needs to promote itself more explicitly as a church school.

Established strengths

- The dedicated work of the headteacher, members of staff and helpers in meeting the educational and personal development needs of individual pupils.
- The excellent behaviour of pupils, and the responsibility and care they show to each other.
- The development and sustaining of a secure and stimulating learning environment.

Focus for development

- Explicitly communicate and celebrate the school's Christian distinctiveness.
- The provision of greater support and guidance for those leading acts of worship.
- Strengthen the role of foundation governors to encourage, support and monitor the Christian distinctiveness of the school.
- Extend the partnership between school and church.

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

The Christian ethos of the school is evident in the way in which pupils express how they feel valued and by the quality of the care and attention given to their individual educational and personal needs. The impact of this ethos includes the provision of a range of lunch-time clubs and activities, while individual empathy and responsibility is encouraged through the observation of times of local, national or international crisis or difficulty. This is extended through active support of a number of Christian and other charities. The individual successes of pupils are marked within the weekly 'celebration assembly'. The general calm and orderly atmosphere of the school, promoted by the staff maintains the very good behaviour of pupils. Staff members are good role models. The personal well being of pupils is given good attention through involvement with initiatives such as Healthy Schools, from which they learn the importance of personal health and safety. Recent buildings improvements make excellent use of the limited space of the school site and now provide a warm, secure and attractive learning environment. The small library doubles as a stimulating space for the daily whole school act of worship. Here, a finely crafted stained glass window designed using pupils' ideas draws together features of the village and countryside, the church and the community. An older pupil expressed other pupils views when he said that going to the church and finding out about Christianity helps them to 'learn more about God, and to follow Jesus' example'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The atmosphere during worship at the start of each morning is calm and respectful and provides an immediate sense that this is a significant occasion occupying an important place in the school day. Inclusion is fostered as young and not so young sit next to each other 'in the round'. Pupils respond positively to worship and enjoy singing hymns. Their participation in prayer is encouraged by a different pupil each day leading the Lord's Prayer, which is then confidently spoken by all. They are also invited to suggest topics for prayer. This resulted in a discussion about the particular problem facing one member of the community. The young pupil who prayed on behalf of others did so in a natural and confident manner. Pupils of all ages emphasised how much they enjoy producing and taking part in 'class assemblies' where readings and drama are included. They also enjoy the opportunities they are given to help prepare the room for worship. Organisational constraints that prevent the regular attendance of more staff at acts of worship have yet to be resolved. The local Anglican Reader leads worship regularly at school and also when the school goes to the parish church to celebrate festivals such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest. There is often very good attendance by parents and other relatives on these occasions which are also well supported by members of the small local church congregation. The school encourages attendance at the Mothering Sunday service in the church, which on the last occasion was led by the vicar. There is recognition that the preparation of detailed worship guidelines would provide valuable support and encouragement to visiting school worship leaders. Good links are developed between worship and topics in religious education and other subjects. Such work helps to make difficult issues understandable and relevant to learners. Carefully produced Easter week diaries are examples of work, which is routinely displayed in the library, providing a topical backdrop to worship.

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

The headteacher and governors provide effective overall leadership. The school's self evaluation is secure, forming part of overall planning, monitoring and evaluating. The headteacher articulates a vision for the development of a school ethos based on Christian values. Staff are comfortable with their part in this. Governors are aware of the school's Christian foundation and purpose. With the encouragement of the headteacher and Foundation governors there is a developing understanding of their role in supporting and communicating the school's Christian vision. Progress has been made since the last inspection with Christian distinctiveness now strongly stated in the Behaviour and Attendance

policy document. There is recognition that extending this greater prominence to places such as the school brochure and signage will more publicly signal its distinctiveness. The main link with the local church is through the regular visits of the Reader who is also a school governor. Despite the limited number of people to call on, there is a desire by the school to develop links with the church to strengthen parish support for the school. Parents are very happy with the school and are satisfied that the school offers a learning environment underpinned by Christian values where their children will develop their full potential as learners and citizens.

SIAS report March 2008 Hockering Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Norfolk NR20 3HN