

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Kendall Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Recreation Road

Colchester

Essex

CO1 2HH

Diocese: Chelmsford

LA: Essex

Dates of inspection: January 12th 2007

School's Unique reference number: 290117

Acting Headteacher: Rosemarie Sadler

Inspector's name and number: Janet Dyson

School context

This is a small primary school which serves an area with higher than average levels of deprivation. The number of pupils entitled to a free school meal is higher than average. The number of pupils from minority ethnic families is broadly average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly average. Whilst the majority of parents describe themselves as Christian there is a small number of pupils from faiths other than Christianity and 30% of parents describe themselves as 'having no religion'. The substantive headteacher is absent and an acting headteacher has been in post since September 2006. There have been significant staff changes in recent months.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Kendall Primary School as a Voluntary Controlled Church of England school are satisfactory.

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Established strengths

- The positive attitudes of pupils to their school and the ways in which they show care and consideration for each other reflect the implicit Christian values.
- Pupils enjoy assemblies and have positive attitudes to worship.

Focus for development

Governors to work with staff and stakeholders to:

- carry out a rigorous self evaluation of the school's effectiveness as a church school and use the results to inform future planning;
- devote time to considering what constitutes a Christian ethos, what this means in practice and what the implications might be in the context of its population, particularly the high proportion of pupils described as having 'no religion';
- explore ways of making the distinctive character of an Anglican School more explicit in all aspects of the life of the school so that the headteacher and governors can encourage, monitor and challenge more effectively.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, makes satisfactory provision to meet the needs of all learners but the characteristics are often implicit rather than explicit.

The children in the school feel that the school values them as individuals and speak warmly and positively about it. They say that people are kind, friendly and mostly like each other: "There's always some one around when you need help - adults and children." They enjoyed the recent Friendship Week, particularly the opportunities it gave for older and younger children to work together on interesting, practical activities. They are aware of the school's values but do not identify them as Christian, confirming the view that the Christian ethos is implicit but not strongly explicit. The school provides satisfactory support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The spiritual dimension is well supported in assemblies,

for example pupils write prayers and share poems about the natural world such as the beauty of a sunset. This aspect is supported in the curriculum, for example, a display of photographs showed children in the Foundation stage acting out the emotions of the events in the story of Noah's Ark. Christian values are implicit in relationships in the school. Displays around the school encourage spiritual and moral development. The Nurture Centre, (jointly funded with the Christian charity Lifelines) which has been set up to support children with emotional and social needs, is an example of the importance which the school places on caring for and valuing of individuals.

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

Worship has a secure place in the life of the school. Acts of worship are well planned. The chosen themes reflect the key events of the Christian calendar, mark celebrations in other faiths and focus on issues relating to personal development, for example, friendship and family. The Friday celebration assembly is a good model. It is a celebration of personal, social and academic success which effectively includes and involves children across the age range. There is a focal point for worship in the hall with a Christian banner and a table with a candle and Bible. Pupils enter to appropriate music. In one example older pupils read poems they had written, hymns were sung well and the assembly closed with a prayer written by pupils. Pupils enjoy assemblies and have positive attitudes to worship. Parents are beginning to respond to invitations to attend Friday assembly and speak positively about them. Worship takes place in the Parish Church and local Methodist Church for occasions such as Christmas and Harvest. The incumbent regularly leads assemblies and recently provided much valued support for the school following the death of a pupil, working sensitively with the school and family to provide a fitting celebration and memorial of his life. The school is aware of the need to plan assemblies which show sensitivity to those of other faiths and to the significant proportion who do not hold any religious views. The school's worship policy requires updating when a permanent co-ordinator is appointed. New resources have been purchased for planning assemblies and the school is considering how collective worship can be developed by involving pupils in planning, presenting and evaluating assemblies.

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The leadership and management of the school as a church school are unsatisfactory.

The school has experienced a period of considerable change, including some major changes in leadership and staffing. The acting headteacher and the governors provide satisfactory leadership overall and are committed to improving the school. They have not given sufficient attention to identifying what constitutes a Christian ethos and what might give the school the distinctive nature of an Anglican Church School. No self evaluation of these aspects has been undertaken and therefore the governors and headteacher have little information to help them monitor, challenge and develop the school as a church school. It is encouraging that many of the staff are positive about the school as an improving school and aware of its Christian status. Parents and children have not so far been involved in evaluating the school as a church school. Discussion with parents who attended the Friday assembly showed them to be positive about the school, which they see as improving. They commended the caring ethos, although the Christian status was not seen as a key aspect. The school's partnership with the parish church is satisfactory. The distance from the school to the church limits opportunities for visits but there is a well established relationship with the incumbent who leads acts of worship and provides pastoral support for the school. Pupils visit the church for their Christmas service and as part of their religious education. A parish outreach worker works in the school for half a day each week. There is also a link with the wider Christian community through the local Methodist Church.

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