

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Little Munden Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Lane

Dane End

Ware

SG12 0NR

Diocese of St Albans

LA: Hertfordshire

SIAS Inspection: 4th June 2008

Previous S23 Inspection: 30th June and 1st July 2003

URN: 117402

Headteacher: Mrs Lyn Feakes

SIAS Inspector Name: Lindsay Fraser

SIAS Inspector No: NS 107

School Context

This is a smaller than average rural primary school, the majority of children being resident in Dane End with the remainder coming from the surrounding villages. Fewer pupils than average are eligible for free school meals and almost all children are from a White British background. Attainment on entry to the Reception class is at the expected levels for children of this age.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Little Munden VC Primary School as a Church of England school are satisfactory

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Little Munden VC Primary School are satisfactory because a positive ethos underpins the very good relationships, attitudes and behaviour throughout the school, between pupils, between adults and between pupils and adults. However, the school has yet to address formal self evaluation of the school as a church school.

Established strengths

- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children is good as a result of the caring, supportive and respectful ethos of the school community.
- Provision for the development of children's spirituality is evident in the use of the environmental garden and the locality of the school.
- The productive and supportive links with the local church enable children to begin to understand the school's Anglican heritage.

Focus for development

- Introduce a process for monitoring and evaluating the school as a church school.
- Ensure that opportunities to promote the Christian character of the school are developed and maintained.
- Ensure that Collective Worship is distinctly Christian and supports the school's Anglican heritage.

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

The ethos of the school is clearly one of respect and care for all members of the school community. However, it is not evident that Christian values are openly articulated so that children are able to refer to them as such. The outside environment is used to good effect to encourage spiritual development. The environmental garden includes memorials to past members of the school community and artefacts created by pupils of the school. Within the school there is evidence of high quality display and artwork which proudly celebrates the locality in which the school lies. However, there are no displays to celebrate and promote the school's Christian character. This is particularly noticeable in the school hall where there is little to suggest that this area is used for Collective Worship. The school provides a rich and varied curriculum, including a wide variety of activities which are much appreciated by the children. Annual visits are quite adventurous and form an important tradition in the school. Parents value the status of the school as a church school and feel that the school provides the children with a foundation of Christianity together with a balanced understanding of other religions. They appreciate the fact that the younger children are able to participate in a Nativity play as part of their Christmas celebrations. They also speak of how their children can relate a number of biblical stories which they have learned during their visits to the church. Of particular note is the confidence with which the children feel able to challenge their parents with difficult questions and concepts as a result of the teaching they have received in their Religious Education. Through regular fund-raising children are made aware of the needs of others and their specific support for Dogs for the Disabled has enabled the children to see the results of this fund-raising. There exists, at present, little in the way of self evaluation of the distinctive Christian character of the school. However, the Rector has recently taken training in this area and is aware of the need for further development.

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

Worship is important in the life of the school as a time when the whole school meets together as a community. Although collective worship is clearly planned using a variety of resources and takes into account the major events of the church year worship is not always distinctively Christian. Collective worship observed during the inspection had a clear moral message and was supported by prayer, but had no reference to specific Christian values. All children are involved in the saying of grace at the beginning of lunchtime. Children enjoy the visits from the Rector and are able to relate aspects of his teaching. They also enjoy their visits to the church and spoke enthusiastically about the Easter address. Christmas, Easter and Harvest services are very well supported by the parents. Harvest is a particularly important tradition in this rural community. All children in the school are involved in the making of Harvest boxes which are distributed by the oldest children. Children value this time of giving. There are some opportunities for the children to participate in collective worship, but these are limited to question and answer and occasional role play. All children make up prayers connected to the theme of the Church services. When the children have made up their prayers, one child is chosen from each year group to read out their own prayer. Years 5 and 6 are also involved in the bible readings. The development of effective strategies to monitor the impact of collective worship will enable the school to build on current good practices and refine planning to meet the needs of the children.

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

The headteacher has worked hard to create a school in which children enjoy a rich curriculum, a safe and happy environment and a wide range of opportunities in order that the children can move confidently to the next stage of their education. Stakeholders value the status of the school as a church school. There are close links with the local church and

the school premises are used for certain church activities. The school promotes church activities through the school newsletters and the headteacher writes a monthly article for the parish magazine. However the distinctive Christian character of the school is not evident in displays or newsletters and an understanding of how this can be developed is supported as an area for future training. The governing body begins all meetings with prayer and has recently begun to consider and review policies in the light of the school's status as a church school. Plans are also in place to support the new headteacher through diocesan training.

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