

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Long Melford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Cordell Road
Long Melford
Sudbury
CO10 9ED

Diocese of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich

LA: Suffolk

Date of inspection: 4 June 2008

Date of last inspection: February 2004

School's unique reference number: 124707

Name of Headteacher: Sandra Hoskin

Name of Inspector: Simon Windmill 182

Context

Long Melford Church of England VC primary school serves the village of Long Melford and the surrounding area. It has links with its parish church, which is about a mile and a half from the school. It is smaller than average, and the number of pupils from minority ethnic groups or with disabilities or learning difficulties is a little below average.

Summary Judgement

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Long Melford CEVCP as a Church of England school are outstanding.

The school's Christian ethos and values are embedded in school life and have a strong positive influence on pupils' values and attitudes. The supportive and caring relationships give the school a family atmosphere which is evident to all.

Established strengths

- The Christian ethos and values, which permeate throughout the school
- Collective worship, which is central in the life of the school
- The caring and supportive relationships between pupils, staff and governors

Areas for development

- Enhance the evaluation of the impact of collective worship on pupils' development
- Implement the new policy for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- Create more areas for quiet reflection in and around the school

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

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 as individuals. Staff provide excellent Christian role models for pupils.

Pupils say they really enjoy school, and they feel valued and safe. Parents speak highly of the care, guidance and support the school provides, and are very happy with the school. Pupils get on exceptionally well with each other and with the staff, and these excellent relationships help pupils develop self-confidence and independence.

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. This is helped by the older pupils who have been trained to be play leaders. They also run the Healthy Tuck shop. The School Council is a highly effective body. Pupils value the opportunities it gives them to suggest improvements, and they feel involved in the school as a result.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong. The headteacher, staff and governors see spiritual and moral development as a vital part of pupils' learning, and encourage this by giving pupils opportunities for such development in collective worship and the wider curriculum. The school has recently reviewed its spiritual, moral, social and cultural policy, which is now being implemented.

The school environment is used exceptionally well to contribute to pupils' spiritual and moral development, for example through many excellent and lively displays which reflect the school's Christian foundation. Extra curricular activities include sports, guitar playing and dancing. The school has plans for creating more quiet areas for reflection and prayer both outside and in the school.

Pupils' awareness and concern for the needs of others is excellent, and as a result they treat each other with care and respect. They help to raise money for the school and for charitable causes. They are also very aware of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles.

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

Collective worship is seen as the foundation of school life by the head and staff, and is securely based on the Christian gospel. It always includes teaching, time for prayer and reflection, and singing. Pupils enjoy worship, and enjoy taking part. Anglican responses such as "The Lord be with you.....and also with you", are used daily, and the Lord's Prayer is sometimes used. Pupils eagerly say their own prayers in collective worship, and an exceptionally high number volunteer for this – about two thirds of the pupils put up their hands when invited to say a prayer.

Pupils have a very good understanding of the range of styles and purposes of prayer, such as saying thank you, asking for help, saying sorry, asking for healing, and asking for forgiveness. They would welcome even more involvement in worship. Prayers are also said before lunch and at the end of the day.

Worship is very well planned around themes that reflect the main festivals of the Church year, such as Christmas and Harvest. Some of these services are held in the Church, but the distance between church and school limits the number of such services. Worship is exciting and inspirational, and pupils respond accordingly. The head, staff, rector and a lay reader lead collective worship between them. A stimulating visual focus is always used in worship. Collective worship is recorded, monitored and evaluated by staff and governors, and the school now plans to use this data more formally in order to assess the impact of collective worship on pupils.

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 exceptionally well supported by the staff and governors. Between them they promote a distinctive and active Christian vision for the school, with Christian values underpinning its life and work.

The school's policies for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and collective worship, staff recruitment procedures, and the stimulating displays around the school all contribute very effectively to the strong Christian influence seen in all aspects of the school's life.

The staff feel valued and involved in the school's development. They all work well together, and enjoy the support given by the governors. This contributes greatly to the happy and supportive atmosphere among staff.

The partnership between the school, the church and the wider community is good, and highly valued by all. Links with the Church are particularly close, and the rector has an effective and valued pastoral role in the school. Foundation governors promote the school within the PCC to ensure effective communication between both.

Parents and members of the wider community hold the school in very high regard. Parents acknowledge that the school's successful and purposeful family atmosphere is generated and sustained through the school's caring Christian relationships. Parents and the wider community feel well informed about the school's activities, and enjoy the fact that they are positively encouraged to get involved in its life in a number of ways.