

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Mellis Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Yaxley Road  
Mellis, Eye  
Suffolk  
IP23 8DY

#### **Diocese: St Edmundsbury & Ipswich**

Local authority: Suffolk  
Dates of inspection: 3 February 2009  
Date of last inspection: February 2005  
School's unique reference number: 124737  
Headteacher: Mr Richard Cattermole  
Inspector's name and number: John Rudge

#### **School context**

Mellis is a relatively small school, serving a rural community. The number of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds or with English as an additional language is very small. The proportion of those with disabilities or requiring additional help with learning is below the national average for similar schools. The school is located near local parish churches and other Christian groups, with which it shares helpful and supportive relationships.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Mellis Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding**

The school provides very high quality learning in an outstandingly caring, safe and supportive atmosphere. Children very much enjoy learning in this school and achieve very well, as the recent Section 5 inspection attests. The school is highly effective as a Church school because its Christian foundation is clearly expressed and celebrated and influences the whole life of the school. The headteacher, staff and governors offer committed leadership in promoting the school's Christian foundation, and in encouraging a sense of shared responsibility and enthusiasm for developing its ethos with all stakeholders, including the children themselves.

#### **Established strengths**

- The quality of learning offered to all children, supported by Christian values
- The school's readiness to celebrate its Christian foundation boldly, in the context of providing an open and inclusive community school
- The carefully considered and imaginative steps the school is starting to take in providing a sharper focus on key Christian values and the ongoing development of collective worship.

#### **Focus for development**

- Continuing to refine the school's distinctive Christian ethos further through the expression of its values
- Widening further the involvement of all stakeholders in promoting the Christian ethos of the school
- Ensuring that foundation governors take a more prominent role in monitoring and evaluating the quality of collective worship.

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

The outstanding quality of learning and support for all children is effectively underpinned by the school's Christian ethos. This ethos is expressed in the school's atmosphere, for example in the enjoyment and behaviour of the children in their lessons, and in the quality of relationships between staff and children. It is also evident in the way in which the school's Christian foundation is expressed clearly and openly, through simple but effective symbolism and through its documents, publicity and policies, and grounded and celebrated in Christian collective worship. Within this Christian framework, children are also encouraged to celebrate the inclusive nature of the school community, as can be seen in displays around the school, and in the positive attitudes of the children towards difference and diversity. Children are not only familiar with some important Christian stories but are also able to explain why such Christian values as stewardship, forgiveness and the importance of making a fresh start are important in their own lives and in the life of the school. Following careful consideration and wide discussion, the school is starting to implement a programme of regular and sustained reflection on key Christian values. This is likely to enhance further the centrality of the Christian vision in the life of the school.

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

The daily act of collective worship is a central feature of the school's provision for all pupils. It brings the whole school community together, sets the tone for each day, offers an opportunity to focus on and celebrate Christian ideals, and enables pupils to share a time of quiet reflection in a reverent atmosphere. It is very well planned with a clear learning framework appropriate to the age and ability range of the children. All staff have a shared sense of responsibility for collective worship and participate in presenting it. The quality of collective worship is enhanced by clear and supportive guidance. Children prepare and take part in small presentations and in prayers. Acts of collective worship include a blend of expressive and reflective activities. Music, song, drama and visual imagery, as well as simple and formal ritual enrich the experience for all participants and help to reflect the practice of the Church of England. In keeping with the school's thoughtful approach, possible ways of introducing some aspects of the Eucharist have been considered. This would, however, take place after a period of preparation, including focused work in RE. Written evaluations of the effectiveness and impact of collective worship help to keep the school focused on its quality and impact on the children. The school is aware that other stakeholders, and particularly foundation governors, should also play a more central monitoring role in relation to collective worship.

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

The headteacher provides committed leadership in developing, maintaining and fostering the Christian vision of the school. Collective worship is currently a focus for development, especially now that the school is moving towards a values-based approach and working out how this is likely to impact on the daily life of the school. Typically, such matters are carefully thought through so that new developments have a sound and sustained basis. There is a clear goal to ensure that the Christian ethos is prominent in the school's thinking, and that its actual impact on the whole school community is its main focus. Close links with parish churches and clergy, and with other local Christians, also ensure community involvement in collective worship and opportunities for children to plan and take part in church services. The school has a strong and beneficial relationship with the Diocese. This has a significant and continuing impact on developing the Christian ethos of the school, including through staff training in both collective worship and RE and has helped the school to address these matters holistically. The school's self-evaluation, which includes the views of foundation governors, gives an accurate assessment of its development as a Church school. A typical feature of the school's leadership is the readiness of all involved to seek new and effective ways of developing the spiritual life of the school, including the involvement of a wider spectrum of stakeholders. In all these respects, the school has excellent potential for further progress.