

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Milton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Humphries Way,
Milton,
Cambridge
CB4 6DL

Diocese: Ely

Local authority: Cambridgeshire
Dates of inspection: 31st October 2006
Date of last inspection: 2002
School's unique reference number: 288776
Headteacher: Miss Sue Dorrington
Inspector's name and number: Shirley P. Watts 202

School context

Milton is a large school of 395 pupils. It serves a village on the outskirts of Cambridge. There are a few children from other faiths, but none withdrawn from Collective Worship. The Headteacher took up post 14 months ago and there have been a number of new appointments. The building has been extended to accommodate increased numbers. The grounds reflect environmental concern but enable pupils to have space.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Milton Primary as a Church of England school is good

The ethos and vision of the school is Christian centred thus enabling positive values and attitudes to permeate all aspects of the school. It reaches out to others both within the school, community and Church. Projects to enhance this are in place, such as Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning and BandA (Behaviour and Attendance). The school is currently working towards National Healthy School Status. The school is a safe and caring establishment for staff and children which enhances learning.

Established strengths

- The strong Christian ethos and vision of the school in which all pupils are highly valued and nurtured.
- The leadership of the Headteacher, Governors and Governing body is very good and gives a clear and firm direction to the school.
- Acts of Worship are of very high quality, the teaching of which is seen within the school.
- There are excellent links with parents, Church and Community
- Christian principles and values are at the centre of the whole school.

Focus for development

The school has identified areas in Collective Worship where there is a need for further recording and planning and the inspector concurs with this analysis.

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

The Christian ethos is strong. It is seen in all aspects of the school and is reflected in the keeping of the rules which are drawn up by the pupils. Pupils' work is displayed and they are eager to talk about it and are very proud of their achievement. There is a commitment to the practice that "every child matters" and this is seen through the teaching of PHSE, which

reinforces the development of the whole child. Pupils and parents feel that the school is a safe place, and pupils feel they are a “family” helping each other both around the school and in the classroom. The shared Christian vision is also exemplified throughout the school by the conduct of the pupils and in their positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy participating, and working together, and there are a number of voluntary activities, including aerobics, before school starts

Pupils feel able to speak to adults and seek help and advice. Christian love is seen in the behaviour of the pupils, and the way the older pupils help younger ones around the school. Every classroom has a Golden Behaviour Chart which ensures consistent expectations. Adults and pupils, alike, demonstrate mutual respect in their dealings with one another. The pupils are very courteous and caring towards each other, and confident in talking to visitors. They say they enjoy school and that there is no bullying. They were confident they would feel able to talk to staff if they were concerned about anything. The atmosphere both in the building and the playground is relaxed but orderly and has a natural welcoming feel as you enter. A democratically elected School Council makes many suggestions which are successfully implemented; an example of this in action was to place special benches in both playgrounds; children who are feeling lonely sit on these benches, and other pupils, noticing this, will invite them to join their activities.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good with some outstanding features.

Collective worship normally takes place in two groups because of the size of the available hall accommodation. It is very well planned and organized, with good use of visual aids to support the theme of the worship. It is central to the school day and its message permeates throughout the school's life. There is strong Christian teaching and the major (and some minor) Christian Festivals are celebrated either in school or Church. Pupils are eager to participate in worship, as is seen when the school musicians play instead of a music tape. Pupils listen intently and are quiet and thoughtful as they leave the hall. Once a week a “Thought for the Day” act of collective worship is held in individual class rooms, in which staff and pupils are able to discuss the worship theme for the week in a more personal and focussed way, and at a level appropriate to the children's understanding. Reflection on the worship themes continues into the school day. Examples of this could be seen when a pupil was reflecting on the beauty of a dragon fly and how it was created, or the way in which pupils were aware of, and reached out to, others in need. A tree of “New Beginnings” (leaves) was a whole school project arising from collective worship, showing what the pupils had learnt and thought about during the first half of term. It demonstrated the need for new beginnings in the life of the school and individuals. Those issues depicting “old ways” (leaves) were “thrown away”. The tree is in the hall and will be used by members of the school to reflect on their own personal development at a later time. The pupils have taken it very seriously, but with an element of fun and anticipation.

The KS 1 pupils set up a focus table on which is a candle stand. There are also two Worship focus boards and a Cross. Parents are encouraged to join the children for collective worship on Fridays on those occasions when the worship is being led by the pupils themselves.

The Rector leads collective worship once a week and is in school at other times.

The worship is consistently and recognisably Christian and its teaching is reflected throughout the whole school.

Pupils learn about other faiths, and during the inspection there was an acknowledgement that Divali was being celebrated by Hindus. This encourages pupils of other faiths to feel they are included in the family of the school. No pupils are withdrawn from Collective Worship.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is good with some outstanding features.

The new head has a very strong management team who have a shared Christian vision for the school and who are prepared to work to continue its development. The vision is based on Christian values of demonstrating care and support, and concern for others including those outside the school and in other countries. Letters of appreciation have been received for money pupils have raised. Visits are made to the elderly at Harvest, and also at Christmas for carol singing.

Staff appointments take into account the school's Christian ethos. The staff team is mutually supportive of each other and of the Headteacher, an example of this is that there is sometimes specific prayer for someone in collective worship. Staff are good role models for the pupils. The school is well supported by the Governors, including the Foundation Governors, who ensure policies and practices are reviewed regularly. Professional training for both Governors and school staff takes place and there is a close link with the Diocese and the Church; one of the recent outings enjoyed by pupils was a Schools Day at Ely Cathedral. The local Rector is very supportive of the Headteacher and school, and is available to listen to staff, pupils and parents; in addition, the Youth worker is involved in activities with pupils after school. Many of the pupils' families attend Church. Pupils from other faith communities also feel fully included in school life.

The school council plays a large part in helping to improve the school, and their suggestions are listened to and acted upon as appropriate. A recent suggestion included having music in the dining room at lunch time.

The school works closely with the parents through questionnaires and news letters. The parents spoken to were very complimentary about the school and felt there were definite Christian expectations and teaching. There is a "Guide to Parent Helpers" which is reassuring to both parents and children as it sets out clearly the expectations of the school. Staff are seen as very approachable and welcoming, and there are strong links with the pre- schools.

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