

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Newdigate Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Village Street

Newdigate,

Dorking

RH5 5DJ

Diocese: Guildford

Local authority: Surrey

Dates of inspection: 2 July 2007

Date of last inspection: January 2003

School's unique reference number: 125192

Headteacher: Ms L Trueman

Inspector's name and number: The Revd A Fiddian-Green (NSI no 383)

Description of the school

Newdigate Church of England Aided Infant School has 110 pupils making it a smaller than average infant school. It is a village school, and about half the pupils are from the village of Newdigate, whilst the remainder come from surrounding villages. The majority of pupils are of British/white heritage. Parents think very highly of the school and attainment overall is above average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Newdigate as a Church of England school are outstanding

Newdigate Church of England Aided Infant School is outstanding as a church school.

The school's Christian foundation underpins the whole school community in all it does. Links with the parish church and the village community are particularly strong. Pupils are happy and feel secure and valued.

Established strengths

- There is a very strong, caring, Christian ethos.
- Links to the parish church and the village are outstanding
- Worship is outstanding.
- Religious education (RE) is very well planned and organised.
- The headteacher's leadership and management are outstanding.

Focus for development

There are no significant areas for development.

Through its distinctive Christian character, the school makes outstanding provision in meeting the needs of all learners.

This school, as a Church school, is outstanding in meeting the needs of its learners and has a very firm Christian basis for all its life and work. Pupils feel safe and valued and do not hesitate to talk about the support they both give and receive. "I like school because everyone is kind to each other," wrote one pupil. They speak enthusiastically about the "buddy bench" which ensures that no child is left alone at playtimes. All pupils, of whatever faith or of none, are respected and valued. Pupils are also taught to respect each other and their school, and they have outstanding role models in the adults who care for them. Pupils' spiritual development is very good, with opportunities for them to explore the natural world, have time to be still and reflect on worship themes, and to develop an understanding of the different faiths learnt about in RE. Pupils, together with their teachers, have formed the classroom rules and these contribute very well to their moral development. They are clearly taught right from wrong. Links with the local church are very strong and the addition of an after school club with a Christian focus, organized by the Rector, adds much to these. 'Wheels and Squeals,' a gathering of mothers and children in Church further adds to these strong links. This is clearly a very happy school, as observation of a whole school gathering, such as lunch, demonstrated.

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

Worship is outstanding and has a clear impact on the life of the school. Its planning, organisation, and inclusive nature show clearly the high priority it has in the school's life. Pupils are very well behaved and join in enthusiastically. Several older pupils have responsibilities such as organising the introductory music, and lighting the candle. In the worship seen, pupils used signing for the deaf and spoke a welcome, and the singing was very good. Pupils write and use their own prayers both in classrooms and in collective worship and also as grace in the dining area. Major festivals, are celebrated in the church, and the Rector leads worship there and in school regularly. During the inspection, a local Free Church minister led an inspiring act of worship, involving all the pupils and relating it to their lives in school and at home. Discussion with pupils revealed their lively appreciation of their school worship and they talked enthusiastically about the stories they have heard both from the Bible and other sources. There is a planned programme of themes and pupils' views are sought and acted upon. Worship makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development as well as underpinning the Christian foundation of the school.

The school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship.

The provision of religious education is outstanding.

The provision for religious education is outstanding. The Diocesan guidelines are followed and planning is excellent. Assessment is used to very good effect and the school has adopted the recently introduced curriculum levels. Teachers' records show that by the end of Year 2 pupils make good progress and achieve well. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was outstanding, with the very active involvement of all the pupils, including some well planned role play. Long term planning includes strong emphasis on Christianity, but also includes work on Judaism and Islam. Classroom observation, scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils demonstrated that they are able to relate stories they have heard and to interpret some of the parables. In learning about Judaism they made a sukkot shelter and used it for eating their fruit offerings. They understood the underlying story of Hanukkah and knew about the oil and the special candelabra. Pupils visit the local church and write about what they have seen such as the font, the pews and the furnishings of the church. Pupils learn to discuss difficult questions such as 'What is God Like?' They are given time for reflection, and these opportunities also contribute very well to their spiritual development.

The school meets the statutory requirements for religious education.

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

The leadership and management of this church school are outstanding. All the adults demonstrate clearly their care and support for all pupils, and the headteacher leads by her example and commitment to Christian principles. As a result, the ethos is clearly to be felt – a caring, supportive, inclusive school. Pupils are happy and parents are fully appreciative of all the school does. A common expression was that it is like a family.

RE is extremely well led, and the co-ordinator has recently undertaken further training and organises the subject with expertise and care.

Governors support the school very well, and there are strong links to the church council. The school features regularly in the parish magazine. The Rector organises an after school club and the church uses the school hall for Children's Church on Sundays. The church gives Bibles to Year 2 leavers in the summer, and the school also goes to the cathedral for special events.

The school is also fully involved in village life, joining in the fete and providing the May Queen. There are further links as the village also enjoys the use of the school pool in the holidays. The school also raises funds to help world projects such as their support for a Peruvian child.