

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Old Catton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Middle School

Church Street,
Old Catton,
Norwich
NR6 7DS

Diocese: Norwich

Local authority: Norfolk

Dates of inspection: 16 July 2007

Date of last inspection: November 2002

School's unique reference number: 121050

Headteacher: Paul Wright

Inspector's name and number: Simon Windmill 182

School context

Old Catton Church of England Middle School is a small middle school on the outskirts of Norwich. It has good links with the local parish church. Almost all pupils come from white British backgrounds. The school is being reorganised as a Junior school from September 2007. Some staff changes have been made in readiness for this.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Old Catton as a Church of England school are good.

The school's Christian ethos is evident throughout the school. It is reflected in the caring and supportive relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils' personal development and behaviour are good, and they enjoy learning within a stimulating, caring and safe atmosphere.

Established strengths

- The Christian ethos and atmosphere of care and support, which fosters pupils' personal development
- The supportive relationships and good role models from staff, which sustain the good behaviour of pupils
- The leadership given by staff and governors in making and strengthening links with the church and wider community

Focus for development

- Use the opportunity of changing to a junior school to review aims and values and develop a shared vision of how to sustain pupils' spiritual and moral development
- Explore ways of giving pupils more opportunities to contribute to Collective Worship
- Develop a practical process for regularly recording, planning and evaluating the impact of Collective Worship

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

Care and support for pupils and staff is very good, and pupils of all abilities are able to flourish in their learning and personal development. The school's Christian ethos is good, being soundly based on Christian values which influence the whole life of the school.

This is reflected in the high quality of relationships within the school, and seen in the school's warm, welcoming, inclusive and friendly atmosphere, which parents value greatly: parental surveys show a high parental satisfaction level (98%). The school runs a Breakfast Club to look after pupils who have to be brought to school early, and a good range of extra curricular activities.

Pupils learn from the good role models of staff and other adults, which help them develop self-confidence and independence. Pupils' behaviour is very good. This is because they are involved in setting the rules for their class, and therefore respect them and understand the consequences if rules are broken. They are also encouraged to take responsibility for their actions, and learn from their mistakes.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong. The headteacher, staff and governors see spiritual and moral development as an important part of pupils' learning, and encourage this by giving pupils opportunities for reflection, in Collective Worship and the wider curriculum.

The Christian identity of the school is visible in various ways, such as a cross on a lectern in assembly, a school prayer, some excellent displays, and in the school brochure. Pupils' awareness and concern for the needs of others is good, and is seen in their contributions to charitable causes. The School Council gives pupils a say in running the school.

Pupils are very aware of the need to look after the environment, and the school has attained the Eco School silver award, along with a number of other awards such as Charter Mark and Investors in People. Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles through diet and exercise.

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

Collective Worship is held every day, attended by all pupils and staff. It has a positive impact on school life, and it is soundly based on the Christian gospel. It always includes singing, teaching and time for prayer and reflection. Music is provided by a very good school band. Staff lead worship well, and the newly appointed Vicar plans to lead 3 or 4 times each term.

Most pupils enjoy worship and join in enthusiastically, especially when they have a part to play in it, but some older pupils are less enthusiastic about worship. They say they would like more variety in worship, and more opportunities to take part in different ways, for example by acting out stories, or helping to plan or lead worship. Pupils understand a range of purposes and styles of prayer. They know the Lord's Prayer and a school prayer, which is said during worship.

Worship is planned around a theme for each week, and reflects the church year. The parish church is used for special services, celebrating the main festivals of the church year such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest. Worship is not yet systematically recorded, monitored or evaluated by the Foundation Governors to assess its impact on pupils.

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

The Headteacher and governors give good leadership to the school. Governors have a good understanding and knowledge of the school. Staff are very positive about the school's leadership and management. They feel valued by the leadership team, and welcome the importance placed on maintaining staff well-being.

The leadership team works well to promote a distinctive and active Christian vision for the school, and Christian values underpin the school's life and work. This is emphasised when new staff are recruited. Parents and members of the wider community speak very highly of the family atmosphere generated through the school's caring relationships, and are very happy with the school. They feel well informed about the school's activities.

Links with the wider community are good, such as the Senior Citizens Lunch Club and the local nursing home. There are also links with the cathedral. Now that the new vicar is in post, the school plans to contribute to the parish magazine, to include church matters in the school's newsletters, and to involve more of the school's musicians in church services.

The school does not have a policy for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, but plans are in place to develop a shared understanding of how spiritual and moral growth can be encouraged.

Old Catton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Middle School, Church Street, Old Catton, Norwich NR6 7DS July 2007