

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Sarratt Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

The Green
Sarratt
Herts.
WD3 6AS

Diocese of St Albans

LA: Hertfordshire
SIAS Inspection: 5th February 2007
URN: 117404
Headteacher: Mrs Christine Buck
SIAS Inspector Name: Catherine Large 482

School Context

Sarratt school has 172 pupils on roll. It is smaller in size than the average primary school but the number on roll has increased in recent years and it is now almost at capacity. It draws about two thirds of its pupils from outside the village. It has no nursery but there is pre-school provision on site. There has been major building development in recent years. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average. There is a below average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. Almost all pupils have a white British heritage and none is at an early stage of learning English.

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

The ethos of Sarratt school is underpinned by basic Christian values. This creates a caring environment in which pupils learn well and flourish as individuals. There are good links with local clergy and Christian youth leaders which promote the Church distinctiveness. . Developments in the school in recent years have greatly improved standards and facilities. However, the school recognises that it has not explored sufficiently ways in which it can identify and strengthen its distinctiveness as a Church of England school.

Established strengths

- The quality of care underpinned by basic Christian values
- The personal development of pupils
- The strong sense of community which helps pupils feel valued as individuals
- Links with local clergy and community

Focus for development

- Monitor the overall provision of collective worship and plan more opportunities for reflection
- Develop closer links with the Diocese
- Undertake, at all levels, a review of ways in which the school can identify and clarify its Church of England status.

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

The caring ethos of the school is evident in the high quality of relationships at all levels and across the full spectrum of school life. There is a strong sense of trust and community in the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance levels are high. Pupils feel secure and recognise that their teachers have a very good knowledge of their individual achievements and learning needs. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and for those who are gifted and talented. There are high expectations of behaviour and pupils respond positively. Pupils value the reward systems and achievement assemblies, especially when their names are recorded in the 'Gold Book'. They are given good opportunities to take responsibility, for example, through the School Council and by

supporting the Health and Well Being co-ordinator in playground duties. Healthy lifestyle programmes are well established and popular, both in the dining hall and in the playground. The spiritual development of pupils is generally good. The close, personal link with Rwanda is enhancing their knowledge and understanding of the wider world. It also promotes their spiritual development as they reflect on differences in life experience. Their wider social and cultural development is well promoted through an excellent range of educational visits and events. The school environment has improved greatly with the additional teaching areas and playground facilities. There are now many stimulating displays and activity areas. The location of the church makes access difficult and so there are limited opportunities for pupils to become familiar with and experience church life and practice in context. The weekly FBI club, led by youth workers from local churches, is well supported by the older pupils and strengthens the Christian dimension of school life.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

There is a good, balanced programme for collective worship which includes different groupings and styles. Pupils are attentive and show respect. They participate eagerly when given opportunity. Once a week, worship is led by the local rector and pupils are introduced to a variety of appropriate Bible stories and encouraged to understand how they have relevance to human experience. The major Christian festivals are observed. Because of the difficulties of access, the local church leads the Christingle and Harvest services in the school so that pupils and the wider community can share in worship together. This is an effective approach. Pupils are positive about worship. They recognise the significance of worship in the life of a church school. They value the opportunities to lead worship themselves, which they do on a termly basis as classes. They enjoy the Leavers' Service occasion in the summer when it is possible to walk together across the fields to the church. The pupils are becoming more familiar with the Lord's Prayer as this has been introduced in some worship. The planning for worship is clear. It identifies themes and key elements. The school has not undertaken any staff training on the leadership of worship and the opportunities for spiritual development it presents. Currently, the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship is at an early stage and the school recognises the need to advance their skills and approaches.

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

The headteacher, staff and governors, are very committed to the basic Christian ethos of the school. They speak of the love and honesty that underpins the relationships and this is evident in the practice and policies that operate. The headteacher and staff at all levels set excellent examples. The partnerships that exist between the school and the local community, including the church, are strengths of the school. For example, pupils visit the old people's home to sing carols and share harvest produce with local residents. The parents of pupils, as well as the community, give magnificent support to the school. Responses to parent and pupil surveys indicate very high levels of satisfaction, both with the learning and the ethos of the school. Displays around the school are evidence of its effectiveness. There are limited opportunities for pupils to visit or encounter members of other Christian denominations or faiths. Expectations of what it means to be a Church of England school have been unclear. It is important that all those in leadership, including the clergy and foundation governors, review the current situation and strengthen links with the Diocese. The school is aware of this and is positive about moving forward. It has now appointed a member of staff and a foundation governor to take the lead in identifying and clarifying ways in which the school can further develop its distinctiveness as a Church of England school.