

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St. Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

School Green Lane,
North Weald,
Epping
Essex
CM16 6EH

Diocese: Chelmsford

Local authority: Essex
Dates of inspection: Tuesday 3rd July 2007
Date of last inspection: 18th and 19th May 2005
School's unique reference number: 115281
Headteacher: Mrs. Gillian Young
Inspector's name and number: John Thurley NS39

School context

St. Andrew's serves as a village primary school providing satisfactory standard as a Church school. It is of average size with a roll of 222. It has fewer pupils from ethnic minorities than average and fewer pupils having English as a second language. The school has recently been seen as an improving school having previously been seen as having serious weaknesses.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Andrew's as a Church of England school are satisfactory.

The school has made recent progress from having been judged as having serious weaknesses two years ago. The Christian ethos of the school is apparent from the artefacts in the entrance through to the behaviour and relationships shown in the school. The major focus has been on raising standards in English, mathematics and science which has meant that religious education has had to take a position of secondary importance.

Established strengths

- Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning
- Care and guidance of the pupils is good
- Strong links with the local church through the involvement of the incumbent as chair of governors and parish priest

Focus for development

- Greater governors involvement in updating the Toolkit
- Consideration of the most effective way to teach the pupils the Anglican traditions
- Careful revision of the Religious Education Syllabus and training for all teachers of the subject

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

Governors, staff, parents and pupils talk highly of the provision the school makes for each individual and are particularly impressed by the range of extra curricular activities. Displays are well used to encourage spiritual development and symbols are clearly understood by the pupils. Pupils are aware of the different faith groups within the school, the majority coming from non practising Christian backgrounds, but they recognise and value the overt Christian ethos within the school. All groups within the school say they feel valued and supported. Pupils feel their opinions are listened to and that the teachers care for their progress and their welfare. They are keen for the introduction of more interactive whiteboards within the school as this adds excitement to their learning. Older pupils are given responsibility towards the

younger ones and they talk enthusiastically that pupils are not ignored or isolated in the playground with specific steps taken to ensure that newcomers are welcomed. The use of the swimming pool is much appreciated and they regard this as a real asset to their learning and social development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Pupils say that they enjoy the assemblies, especially ones where they are able to take part. Worship is planned for the whole year with five main themes being adhered to by the leaders of collective worship. A number of the older pupils expressed their dislike of the Eucharist service in school because it did not involve them for much of the service. Pupils did however say that they liked the non Eucharistic services. They enjoyed the regular acts of worship in the school and joined enthusiastically in with the singing and prayers. A candle is used as a focus during worship and pupils are able to talk about the festivals of the Christian year. The presence of the incumbent, who is also the chair of governors, is welcomed by the pupils and they recognise him as the local vicar and friend. There is room however to rethink the use of the Eucharist in present form and perhaps to consider some of the more modern alternatives now available to Anglicans which might be more appropriate in a school setting.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory with some good features

The standard is variable but with some very good teaching especially at key stage 1. The approach is varied with the opportunities to discuss, take part in role play and in combination with art to examine the features of the parish church. Pupils like the subject and those of other faiths find a positive and inquisitive response from the others. Religious education is important to the school but has recently had to take second place to other core subjects because of the schools serious weakness. Staff and pupils value the input of the incumbent in RE and have been grateful for the work of the subject co-ordinator in recent months. Parents of all faiths are supportive of the subject and value highly its input into the PSHE lessons within the school. Staff now feel that some whole school inset on the provision of RE would be helpful for their personal development and for the necessary growth of the subject within the school curriculum.

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

The headteacher and the foundation governors promote a distinctive Christian vision for the school. Foundation governors attend worship with the pupils on several occasions during the school year. Monitoring and challenging of the headteacher has been effective and supportive for her over the past two years. Parents feel the leadership of the school is positive in developing the understanding and spiritual growth of their children. Governors are confident that the school is improving and that issues are discussed openly and dealt with Christian commitment. The leadership of Religious Education is going to be an issue and it is essential that a member of staff is appointed to lead this curriculum area. Governors have been concerned about curriculum issues over the recent past and now wish to turn their attention to the Church school matters; this will include their involvement in the revision and updating of the Toolkit in the next academic year. The leadership of the chair of governors during the time of serious weakness was a positive influence in the progress the school has made.