

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Stanground St. John's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Chapel Street
Stanground
Peterborough
PE2 8JG

Diocese: Ely

Local authority: Cambridgeshire
Date of inspection: October 7th 2009
Date of last inspection: June 2006
School's unique reference number: 110819
Headteacher: Miss Tracey Phillips
Inspector's name and number: Ann Williams 573

School context

Stanground St. John's is situated in Stanground, a suburb on the outskirts of the city of Peterborough. The vast majority of the 170 pupils come from the local community, and most are from a white British background. However, some pupils do not have English as their first language and a small number have significant medical needs. The number eligible for free school meals is above average. The headteacher has recently been appointed to the permanent post, having previously served as deputy and acting head at the school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Stanground St. John's as a Church of England school are good

The headteacher is building on the good work she started as acting head. Through her efforts, there is now in place a stable senior management team, and the whole staff work together as a mutually supportive team of professionals who nurture and challenge each child in their care. Christian values are at the heart of their commitment, to which pupils respond well, with good behaviour, respect for all and a caring attitude towards one another. The school's Christian foundation is evident in the atmosphere within the school and vibrant displays in classrooms and corridors.

Established strengths

- A committed headteacher and dedicated staff who work together to bring out the best in every child.
- Well-behaved and confident pupils who are proud of their school and happy to be there.
- An enthusiastic team of governors who value their headteacher and staff, and are supportive of the work being done.

Focus for development

- To revisit the mission statement in order to embrace the ideas of pupils as well as staff
- To use the church building more, as a resource for cross curricular activities.
- To develop a more formal method of assessing the impact of collective worship, and to allow a specific time for reflection during the school day.

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

Strategies are in place to ensure the progress of all. Pupils are encouraged and challenged to achieve well, and success in different spheres of life is celebrated each week. Academic achievement is important and the needs of pupils on the gifted and talented register are met with a programme of activities in co-operation with the local secondary school and outside agencies.

However, not only academic success is valued. An award, instituted by a member of the local church, is given each year to two pupils who have demonstrated outstanding citizenship, and is especially appreciated within the school. Those with special educational needs are

nurtured in a safe and caring environment. For example, a child with a severe hearing impairment is able to take a full part in school life, as the whole community has learnt basic sign language and a keyworker signs lesson content for him. Pupils are taught to care for one another through 'Buddy families', with regular cross-phase activities, and by being watchful for anyone feeling lonely and sitting on the friendship bench. Reading buddies, who are adults from the local community, help as required, and volunteers give extra assistance to those whose first language is not English.

Pupils take an interest in the environment with a gardening club, and their experience is enhanced by a variety of after-school activities. They care for the wider community by fund-raising for charities suggested by the active school council and are involved in special events, such as the annual flower festival, at the church.

The school has worked hard to achieve Activemark and Healthy Schools awards.

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

Collective worship at the start of the school day is the foundation on which the remainder of the day is built. Pupils from Year Six prepare the hall with an effective visual focus, placing a candle and the school Bible on a table covered in a cloth, choosing the colour to reflect the Christian season.

Pupils enter quietly to reflective music chosen in turn by the children themselves. They listen to stories and are eager to offer ideas and answers when the opportunity arises. They sing enthusiastically, but are aware of the need to be reverent at the time of prayer and reflection. Prayers written by the pupils are used at times, and the school day ends in prayer for every class.

All staff lead collective worship and the local incumbent and an officer from the local Salvation Army also come regularly. The newly appointed Baptist minister invited pupils to visit his church, where they were introduced to a different tradition of baptism, thus broadening further their experience of styles of worship.

Celebrations for Christian festivals, supported by parents and local residents, are held in the local church and children also participate in special church services to sing or to read prayers or lessons.

Pupils have an understanding of the reason for prayer and the way in which the Christian message can be applied to their daily life. However, there is no specific time during the day for reflection or discussion of issues raised.

Foundation governors are supportive and attend often, but are not sufficiently pro-active in the formal evaluation of the impact of collective worship on the school community.

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

The headteacher has accomplished much, both as acting head and since her appointment to the permanent position. Christian principles form the basis for her leadership, and through her encouragement and example, a stable senior management team has developed and staff work together as a team. The headteacher has a realistic vision of the school as central to the local community, mutually beneficial to pupils and residents, and the mission statement of the school is being rewritten to take in the views of all stakeholders. The relationship with the local church is strong, its members valuing greatly the opportunity to 'bring the church to the school'. There is further opportunity, however, to make greater use of the church building as a curriculum resource and to engage pupils in their local heritage.

Governors are deeply committed and supportive of the school. They are not as mindful of their role to challenge as well as to support all areas of the curriculum. Staff wellbeing is one of their priorities and they are developing an appropriate policy for this.

Parents talk of the Christian ethos permeating school life and the positive effect this has on the lives of their children. They appreciate the welcoming atmosphere and the approachability of staff who know all children as individuals. Parents are kept well informed and their views on various issues are sought and taken into consideration. Those coming new to the school have no doubt that the school is firmly based on Christian principles, through the prospectus which gives prominence to the church foundation and the important place of collective worship in the school day.

There is an active Friends' Association, which raises money for school projects, and the local church community is developing ways of supporting the school through joint fundraising activities.

SIAS report Stanground St. John's VC Primary, Stanground, Peterborough, PE2 8JG