

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Stutton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Holbrook Road
Stutton
Ipswich
Suffolk
IP9 2RY

Diocese: St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

Local authority: Suffolk
Dates of inspection: 9th June 2008
Date of last inspection: 13th and 15th October 2003
School's unique reference number: 124743
Headteacher: Mr Michael Lynch
Inspector's name and number: Mrs Kathryn Wright (436)

School context

This is a smaller than average rural primary school serving the village of Stutton and the surrounding area. The majority of children come from White British backgrounds and fewer than average find learning difficult. The headteacher has been in post for one year, following a period of change in other teaching personnel. The local church is some distance from the school, and the rector took up his post about a year ago.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Stutton (VC) Primary School as a Church of England school are satisfactory.

The school upholds a caring and listening ethos which is based on Christian values. The development of the whole child and their potential are strengths of the school and links with the local church and community are very good. With the recent arrival of the new headteacher and rector, the school is in a position to re-evaluate its distinctiveness as a church school.

Established strengths

- The outstanding provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- The mutual support between the school and the church
- The importance of the pupil voice, especially the school council
- The excellent links with the local community

Focus for development

- To review the school aims and mission statement in the light of the school's Christian foundation
- To make explicit reference to the school's church status in the collective worship and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development policies
- To involve all stakeholders in the church school self evaluation process and establish formal mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating collective worship

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

This is a child centred school. Children are confident and have high self esteem. Parents talk about children being the 'heart of the school'. Children talk about their school being a place where they feel safe and secure. The school mission statement, 'Everyone is special- all of us are meant to shine', is understood well by Key Stage 2 children. One child said, 'Everyone has something they are strong at... it doesn't matter if they haven't discovered it yet'. The school aims and policies are based on Christian values, however this is not made explicit and some children are not fully aware of the Christian teaching that lies behind the school ethos.

Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Children are

able to spend time reflecting in a newly created reading area; in addition they are able to use a designated quiet space in the school playground. Some Year 6 took part in a project with the local church and artist in residence to create silk paintings based on the life of St Peter. This enabled them to explore the meaning behind the name of their local parish church. The introduction of Philosophy for Children lessons has contributed to children's understanding of moral and spiritual issues. Children were asked to consider what would happen if everyone did as they pleased. One child said that if this was the case, 'then what is the point in the earth being created?' In a Year 3/4 classroom, a religious education display demonstrated children's good understanding of the concept of sin.

Children's cultural development is enhanced particularly through links with a school in Ghana, and a display in the Year 5/6 classroom showed different events happening across the world. Effective provision for personal development was observed in a Reception class lesson when children were encouraged to think about caring for minibeasts, and then put this into practice in their garden area.

The importance of the pupil voice is demonstrated through the highly effective school council. The children talk openly about ways in which they have contributed to school improvement, especially in their campaign to become an Eco-school. Children talk about the responsibility it gives them, and how it prepares them for adult life.

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

Collective worship is an important aspect of school life. Children value the social and moral aspects of worship, saying it teaches them how to be friends and live together. Recent changes mean that worship takes place at a time of day suitable for the children, and a candle has been introduced as a focal point. Children respond well during worship and an atmosphere of calmness is created. Medium term planning for collective worship is good. Themes are based on biblical material and festivals of the church year. However, the daily recording of acts of worship is inconsistent and little formal monitoring has taken place.

The rector and one of the foundation governors regularly lead acts of worship. In addition, services are held in the church three times a year. Children commented on the special atmosphere created at these times, saying the worship was 'more real and holy' in the church. Anglican faith and practice is particularly promoted on these occasions, when appropriate liturgy and greetings are used. Some of the children knew that the Lord's prayer was special for Christians. One of the foundation governors has recently attended Diocesan training on leading acts of worship.

The act of worship observed was satisfactory. Children responded well to a story about refugees. Reference was made to Jesus as a refugee and children were asked to reflect on how they might feel if they were fleeing another country. Children commented that they would feel scared, worried and lonely. Despite this, the act of worship lacked coherency, and some children were distracted. Children participated enthusiastically in singing and would value further opportunities to participate in and lead worship.

The collective worship policy is very brief and makes no reference to the school's church status, the organisation of worship, its monitoring or evaluation. In addition, there are currently no formal strategies in place for the monitoring or evaluation of worship by the foundation governors.

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

The headteacher articulates a vision based on Christian values. This is shared by the foundation governors and supported wholeheartedly by parents and staff. However, references to the school's Christian foundation are not explicit in the school aims, collective worship and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development policies; although the school brochure and website do refer to the school's voluntary controlled status.

Whilst the Diocesan self evaluation materials have been used by the headteacher, the foundation governors and rector have not been involved in this process. With the recent changes in personnel at the school and church, this has resulted in some members of the

school community being unclear about what it means to be a distinctive Christian school. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are underdeveloped. Whilst some improvements have been made, particularly in relation to collective worship, there has been little evaluation of their impact.

The school and church provide mutual support, and the foundation governors are regular visitors to the school. The church has provided financial support for a variety of projects including resources for religious education and Bibles for Year 6 leavers. The school hosts a once a month 'Worship for all' service organised by the church, which many children and staff attend. The church has good links with the Parochial Church Council and there is a desire to forge a stronger partnership.

The school has excellent links with its local community. Parents feel that there is an open door policy and that the school listens to their views. The school is at the heart of community life, supporting the Stutton Grows Project, contributing to the village magazine, and organising joint school/community fundraising events. The school hosts a weekly afternoon tea for senior citizens in the village, many of whom stay for the celebration assembly at the end of the day.

SIAS report June 2008 Stutton VC Primary School, Holbrook Road, Stutton. IP9 2RY