

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Swaffham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant and Nursery School**

White Cross Road,  
Swaffham,  
Norfolk  
PE37 7RF

#### **Diocese: Norwich**

Local authority: Norfolk

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> September 2007

Date of last inspection: December 2002

School's unique reference number: 121059

Headteacher: Mrs C. Taylor

Inspector's name and number: Mr J.W. Bradley 129

#### **School context**

This school, currently with 174 pupils on roll, is in its first term as a re-designated Infant and Nursery School, having previously educated pupils to the end of Year 3. It serves the whole of this Norfolk market town and most of the pupils are White British. There is a steadily increasing number who speak English as an additional language. The headteacher has been in post since 2004.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Swaffham Infant and Nursery School as a Church of England school are satisfactory**

Following a period during which the school has had to deal with some challenging situations, its role as a church school is beginning to be more actively considered. The current improvement plan has distinct aims which refer to church school status and work has begun to link church, school and its community in a wider variety of ways. The school is clear regarding the impact its Anglican status should have upon the atmosphere created for its pupils. Relationships throughout the school are good and based firmly upon Christian principles.

#### **Established strengths**

- The Christian relationships evident throughout the school.
- The desire and will to enhance church school status.
- The Christian family atmosphere evident during worship.

#### **Focus for development**

- To develop the role of staff and governors to include evaluation of church school status.
- To increase links with the parish church.
- To complete the system to evaluate worship.

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

Pupils in this school feel valued, members of a close knit community and well supported by caring adults. This is described by a Parochial Church Council member as 'being embodied in the way staff have time and patience in abundance for each child'. This stems from an adherence to Christian values practiced by all those concerned with the needs of the pupils. Swaffham Infant and Nursery School is a school where people matter, whether they be pupil, staff member or parent. Pupils say 'when people are sad we play with them'. The School Creed, prominently displayed, clearly states 'that this shall be a happy place where we love one another'. A cross, plus other Christian displays and artefacts around the school, indicates its church school status. The needs of others are constantly stressed. Charitable giving has a high profile, with a wide variety of causes being regularly supported. The pupils are therefore able to appreciate needs well beyond their own school and community. Religious education teaching links well with the school's caring ethos and enhances spiritual

development by encouraging reflection upon how the subject matter can impact upon life today. Other lessons too emphasised caring and sharing as being vital for living together, such as during the literacy session with a group of very new reception pupils.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory**

There is an obvious atmosphere of a large family being together during worship at this school. The worship is clearly Christian in nature with pupils enjoying the experience, eagerly taking part and feeling they all matter. The activity reinforces the school's caring ethos and is well planned on a thematic basis, with flexibility built in to cater for special occasions, natural disasters etc. Pupils know they are worshipping, they sing and pray well, particularly the Lord's Prayer, and are given opportunities for reflection. The atmosphere of worship is enhanced by the use of a display of cross, flowers and a Bible, but no candle is used to denote the beginning and end of the service. All staff regularly attend, thus confirming the whole community aspects of the occasion. Anglican aspects are well served by the weekly contributions of a committed incumbent, whose visits are much enjoyed by the pupils. A start has been made upon the evaluation of the impact of worship, particularly by governors, but this is at a very early stage and there is, as yet, no staff involvement in this process. Some members of staff are expressing an interest in leading worship which will benefit the pupils by providing them with the opportunity to experience different styles of the leadership of worship. More thought is to be given to how parents can be encouraged to attend in order to enhance the school's sense of wider community. There is currently no detailed record keeping system for worship or monitoring procedures regarding its impact upon the pupils and school ethos.

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

The headteacher, supported by governors, staff and incumbent, is now beginning a process of raising the profile of Swaffham Infant and Nursery as a church school. There is a common thread running between all concerned with these developments that 'the things we need to do are the things we want to do'. Staff and governors do not, as yet, actively consider or evaluate what should be distinctive about their school as a church school and there are plans for these aspects to be explored and developed. The current Mission Statement emphasises Christian values. However the distinctiveness of the school as a church school is not explicit within its aims and objectives. It is notable that the headteacher has recently spoken to the Parochial Church Council regarding future joint developments and that this was well received. The views of staff, parents and governors are being used to further this process and good ideas, such as more services to be held in church, are beginning to emerge. The school relates well to its wider community and staff willingly and ably give their time to helping those with problems. This is much appreciated by parents who say 'we and our children are very well cared for'. The supportive incumbent is well known by the pupils, showing them that theirs is a church school. This work and the school's commitment to others, carried out within an atmosphere of Christian love demonstrate that staff and governors are now clear in their determination to 'make sure we are a church school'. Relationships between parents, pupils staff and governors, based upon clear Christian values are very much part of this school. There is therefore a sound basis for progress.