



## Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report



**Cockernhoe Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**  
**Cockernhoe, Luton LU2 8PY**

**Diocese of St Albans**

**LA:** Hertfordshire  
**SIAS Inspection:** 9 September 2008  
**Previous S23 Inspection:** 13-16 September 2004  
**URN:** 117446  
**Headteacher:** Mr Paul Quinton  
**SIAS Inspector Name:** Mrs Mel Adams  
**SIAS Inspector No:** 58

### **School Context**

The school is a small primary school located alongside St Hugh's church in the village of Cockernhoe. Four classes are taught in mixed year groups. Standards are good. Pupils are admitted on residency in the village followed by church criteria which includes both Anglican and other denominations in the local area. Almost all the children are from white British backgrounds and have English as a first language. There have been significant changes in leadership and staffing in the past year, with a new Headteacher and new teachers in all classes.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Cockernhoe Endowed as a Church of England school are good**

Cockernhoe is a good church of England school working well in partnership with the church. The Christian ethos underpins its Christian character enabling children of all ages to develop well academically, spiritually, socially and morally in a safe and happy environment.

### **Established strengths**

- The Christian ethos of the school, which creates an environment in which children can grow and flourish.
- The partnership between the church and the school which supports all members of the school community
- The opportunities for prayer which are appreciated by both adults and children.

### **Focus for development**

- To ensure ongoing church school improvement by including all stakeholders in systematic self evaluation as part of the regular evaluation and development cycle.
- To raise standards in RE and collective worship through regular monitoring and evaluation.

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

A shared commitment to valuing each child as a unique individual, and a setting in which the teachings of Jesus provide a moral code on which children build their lives, ensure that the school is good at meeting the needs of all learners. Good role models provided by adults support children in showing care for each other, evident by the responsibilities taken up by older children in supervision and support of younger children during playtimes. Children of all ages speak of feeling safe and happy in school. Parents, Governors and the Headteacher speak of values such as forgiveness and reconciliation which inform the management of behaviour. Children have a good understanding of these values and know that they are inspired by the example of Jesus, affecting the decisions they take, like 'forgiving my friend when we have an argument, she forgives me and we make up' However, in discussion children are less able to name other Christian values. Staff are likely to draw attention to the messages from assembly to support behaviour management. School council enables children's voices to be heard leading to one assembly each week now being organised and led by children. Prayer areas are displayed in all classrooms and contribute to children's spiritual development, extending the opportunity for worship into the school day. Inspired by a song taught by the vicar, children see that 'prayer is like a telephone for us to talk to Jesus', helping them personally and also supporting their friends.

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

Staff and children take part in the daily act of worship led by the Headteacher, other members of staff or the vicar, who also leads a monthly school service in the local church. Children describe how the morning assemblies 'give a great start to the day' and relate this to their enjoyment of the singing, stories and prayers which help them to grow in their understanding of God and faith. Opportunities are provided for reflection and prayers are linked to the theme of the worship and its practical implications for the day ahead. Children are eager to participate and were observed in role play about Nehemiah, from which they were learning about working hard, working together, and not giving up in the face of opposition. Children later in the day described how this had helped them in class. Singing is very good, and following requests via school council, the meaning of the songs is now explained to them. The monthly assemblies in church are well attended by parents who further support the work and worship through a weekly prayer time. Anglican faith and practice are evident and children are familiar with prayers such as the Lord's Prayer and know about the major festivals. Evaluation of worship by staff or governors has yet to take place.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good.**

Children's achievements in Religious Education overall are around the expectations for their age. Recorded work generally matches the standards within the school, as evident in a year 4/5 display on Islam. Progress is good overall, measured each half term against the criteria on the agreed syllabus. Where marked work relates to developing religious understanding, children are given feedback which helps them to improve, but this is not consistent. Lessons plan to cover learning about and learning from religion, and both appear in some written work. Opportunities for learning from religion are expressed well where children are given opportunities to understand experiences, for example through writing diary accounts or letters. Lessons as observed in the inspection, can seek to cover too much, leading to insufficient time for thinking and developing ideas. Where questioning is open ended, the children have opportunity to develop religious understanding, but opportunities for recording these responses are not yet in place. Children say they enjoy RE, relating the understanding they develop to their day by day lives. Without RE, one child said, 'we wouldn't have a chance to think about how to make things better'. They appreciate that knowing about Jesus and his teachings helps them to do this, and that learning about different religions helps them to appreciate that people understand faith in different ways. A development this academic year is that children are taught RE by their class teacher to ensure that what the children learn has an impact throughout the school day and across the curriculum. The value of this was demonstrated where children understood that parables teach about life, and confidently contributed to a discussion about the meaning of forgiveness. Their responses also illustrate that children feel safe to take risks as they grapple with developing understanding. Monitoring of RE lessons has yet to be developed.

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

The Governors, Headteacher, staff and parents share an understanding of the vision for the school as a church school summarised by the vicar as 'promoting pastoral care and high educational standards inspired by the love of God, challenged by being creative in the image of God'. The Headteacher has a growing understanding of his leadership of the school as a church school and is very clear that 'each child is an individual, and that by giving them an understanding of what Jesus stands for they are being given essential foundations to become empathetic and successful people'. Weekly newsletters celebrate success and also carry a 'thought for the week' encouraging reflection. The church and school have a good partnership. The vicar's pastoral support helped to give understanding and a Christian perspective to the school and community during a recent event causing concern, through his teaching on 'who is my neighbour'. A new process to the school, evaluation as a church school by the Headteacher and staff has accurately identified strengths and areas for development. Questionnaires to parents and children do not yet include evaluation of the school as a church school. Governors, though aware of the content of the church school evaluation, are yet to be involved themselves and it is not included in regular evaluation and school improvement planning. Staff feel valued and a recently retired teacher wrote to say that in her short time working with the Headteacher, he had made her feel highly valued. Partnership with parents is good and parents appreciate the importance of the Christian ethos in their children's development, illustrated by one parent describing how the school in perceiving children as made in the image of God and also loved by God provides a good setting in which to learn and grow as a whole person. The school has been involved in fundraising for a number of charities at home and abroad, including a sponsored swim for a child in the community.