



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

**Graveley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Ashwell Common, Graveley, Hitchin SG4 7LJ**

Diocese of St Albans

LA: Hertfordshire
SIAS Inspection: 1st December 2008
Previous S23 Inspection: 10th-13th December 2004
URN: 117395
Headteacher: Mrs Lisa Massey
SIAS Inspector Name: The Revd Vanessa Cato
SIAS Inspector No:

School Context

Graveley is a small village school with four classes of mixed age groups. Pupils are mainly from white British backgrounds with a few children from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of children with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. The much needed, extensive improvements to the school buildings are due to begin in January. The Headteacher has been in post since the beginning of the current term.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Graveley School as a Church of England school are satisfactory.

Graveley is a happy and caring school where pupils and parents consider that "everyone is valued" and there is "a positive learning environment". However, there is little awareness of the school as a Church School or that its ethos is based on Christian values. Most areas for development highlighted by the 2004 Section 23 Inspection have not been addressed. The new Headteacher has made some progress in raising the profile of Graveley as a Church School.

Established strengths

- A strong, caring and committed Headteacher, Senior Management Team and Governing Body with potential for significant progress.
- A happy school where children are able to make good progress within a family atmosphere and a moral and caring environment.
- A commitment to change and improvement.

Focus for development

- Revise the Worship Policy to reflect the distinctive Christian and Anglican character of the school.
- Daily Collective Worship to have predominantly Christian content and character, to be obviously worship and clearly contributing to the children's spiritual development.
- Training for staff and governors on the distinctiveness of the Christian character of a church school and their role in promoting this.
- Ensure the status of Graveley as a Church School is explicit in signage, publications and documents.

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

Graveley is clearly a "happy school" where staff and pupils are caring and considerate and in turn feel cared for. Christian values are implicit in the way all pupils are enabled to flourish as individuals, in good relationships at all levels, and in the way all pupils, of whatever ability, culture or religion are respected and supported in their learning. The school environment encourages spiritual development and the behaviour policy, lessons and the example of staff promotes moral development. Socially the children are well-developed. They are aware of one another's needs and are encouraged to consider the effect of their behaviour on others. The budget allocation for RE and Worship is good. Christmas displays in the hall were religious and good quality teaching and some good work were observed. Nevertheless, the school's explicit Christian identity and ethos have not been evident. The Hertfordshire RE syllabus is followed, though knowledge of Christianity appears weak. Parents are often not aware Graveley is a Church School and see little or no connection between the happy caring school and its Christian Foundation. These areas for development were highlighted by the previous Diocesan Inspection, but very little progress has been made. The new Headteacher has begun to address these issues.

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

During this term classrooms had created a quiet corner or prayer table and grace is now said before lunch. Prayer booklets written by the children are evident in some classrooms and the children told me their prayers are sometimes used. All pupils attend Collective Worship and staff often attend. A focal table has been introduced, a feature with potential for imaginative development. Pupils generally enjoy Collective Worship, although few seem to have a clear idea of what worship is, linking it most often to the prayer at the end. Only one "assembly" is designated religious and, rather than worship, the children mostly seem to experience an interesting educational experience or a chance to celebrate achievement. The occasion observed was interesting but failed to relate to any specific Christian theme or idea. Opportunity for reflection is minimal. Singing assemblies are enjoyed, but no hymns or songs were sung at the worship observed. The Rector leads worship twice a term and the church is very occasionally used for worship. While religious festivals of all major faiths are celebrated and good cross-cultural links are evident, links with the Anglican tradition are weak and there is a lack of Christian content, both issues raised by the last inspection and by a number of parents. The Collective Worship Policy does not reflect expectations of a church school and needs to be revised in consultation with the Diocese to reflect a distinctive Christian ethos. This was an issue raised in the last inspection.

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

Clear improvements have been made since the arrival of the new Headteacher. The Governing Body deliberately involved the Diocese in order to appoint a person to lead Graveley as a Church School. Parents have observed positive changes, including improvement in behaviour, open access to the Headteacher and staff, and concerns met. Lack of action taken on the last Diocesan Inspection is among the evidence of a past reluctance to promote the school as a church school. Parents are mostly ignorant of the Christian Foundation and what it means. There is also a perception that there is good provision for other faiths, but a “holding back” on the Christian faith. Communication regarding RE and worship is lacking outside the prospectus. The Governing Body needs to ensure publications, signage and policies reflect the status of Graveley as a Church School and Christian Foundation. There are some links with the local community, but these need developing further. There is also a need to develop stronger links with the local church and the diocese, to consult with the Diocesan R.E. Adviser on areas for development and make use of other Diocesan resources. Nonetheless, governors and staff appear supportive of the Headteacher’s commitment to develop the Christian character of Graveley, while recognising the need for training and information regarding the distinctive qualities of a church school.