



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Catherine's Hoddesdon Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Haslewood Ave, Hoddesdon EN11 8HT

Diocese of St Albans

LEA: Hertfordshire
SIAS Inspection : 21st June 2006
Previous S23 Inspection:
URN: 133773
Headteacher: Wayne Howson
SIAS Inspector : Alan Thornsby NSI137

Context

St Catherine's school is a successful amalgamation of a former infant and junior school in the centre of Hoddesdon. The school enjoys an extensive site with a range of play and reflective areas and a swimming pool. Most pupils are White British, with others from a range of minority ethnic groups.

Summary Judgement

St Catherine's is a good church school where the quality of care is deeply embedded in its Christian values. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and the links with the church contribute greatly to the ethos of the school.

Established strengths

- The vision and commitment of the headteacher
- The quality of the care and support given to the pupils
- The positive attitudes of the pupils to the broad curriculum
- The effective links with the church.

Focus for development

- Ensure that the school aims reflect the Christian foundation of the school
- Give pupils greater opportunities in leading worship
- use self assessment as a church school to inform priorities for development.

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

This is because of the very strong ethos of care and sensitive support for all members of the school. The practice is clearly based on Christian values of care, forgiveness and reconciliation, but there are no references in documentation to its Christian foundation. The whole community is proud of the way the school promotes respect and tolerance through the care and support it offers.

The school has a successful commitment to the aims of 'promoting the highest standards of learning and achievement of all'. The LEA have recognised the welcome and successful integration of pupils who have unsuccessful experience of other schools. Immigrant pupils are equally welcomed and integrated. Pupils respond extremely well to the 'fun' learning environment. They know their achievements are recognised in a variety of ways. Children recognise the good relationships that are a strength of the school, and the fair attitude of the teachers. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are part of the daily life of the school and are especially prevalent in the cross-curricular whole school themes such as the village study. This includes a comparison of village life in Africa and England. Pupils also raised funds to support the education of a child in Africa. Such projects give pupils a greater understanding of social need and conscience. The loss of the hamster enabled pupils to explore issues of grief and loss in a supportive environment. Adults in school provide very effective role models. This is because of the shared ethos and quality of relationships forged by the headteacher during the amalgamation of the two staff teams. This has been a significant achievement and there is now mutual respect and care between all members of the school. The excellent role model of the headteacher has created a unified team committed to its pupils. The school environment is effectively used to encourage spiritual development through themed displays with reflective questions. The story circle, willow structures and wildlife areas provide reflective areas outside which are enjoyed by the children.

The worshipping experience provided by the school is good.

This is because of the importance given to worship in the daily life of the school. Themes such as 'Good to be me', and 'How the Bible can help' are developed by a range of leaders, including the vicar and curate. The delivery of worship is often very lively to engage the pupils making them aware of the special time of worship. The content is related to the children's experience and this helps them to respond appropriately to a time for guided reflection and prayer. Individual leaders conduct their own informal evaluation and each theme is evaluated in a staff meeting.

Pupils enjoy worship recognising the importance of coming together to share stories and thoughts. They participate in role-play and singing, but have little opportunity to plan and lead worship. Children articulate the benefits of learning about God and Jesus and the opportunities to reflect on their actions and impact of these on actions others. Major festivals are celebrated in church. Carols by lantern light, including a nativity play, are celebrated in the school grounds. These events add to the children rich experience of worship,

The leadership and management of the school is good.

This is because of the clear well communicated vision of the headteacher for the school, based on the principles of care and support. Christian values of respect, tolerance and forgiveness are central to this ethos. Prayer plays a prominent role in worship and in governors meetings. Governors are effective critical friends. The successful amalgamation of two schools was a result of the effective inclusion of all staff in devising a mission statement and aims. These are constantly referred to in decision-making. All staff are valued and are often part of delegated decision making and leadership. Self-evaluation as a church school has been the subject of discussion, but there are no systems in place to inform the school priorities for development. Pupils and parents are able to express their views via the elected school council and questionnaires. The results and subsequent actions are shared throughout the school community. Links with the church are effective in their impact on the school. The vicar and curate are regular visitors in school leading worship each week. The church is used for festival services, including newly instigated Ash Wednesday service that was enjoyed by pupils. There is good support from the parents for these services. The church, vicar and curate also contribute to the teaching of religious education.. There is mutual support between the school and church for fundraising events. There are good links to and understanding of other faiths by the pupils because of the commitment of the school to every child having an annual visit to, or visitor from, other places of worship.