

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Little Munden Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Lane
Dane End
Ware
Hertfordshire
SG12 0NR

Diocese: St Albans

Local Authority:	Hertfordshire
Date of inspection:	20 January 2011
Date of last inspection:	4 June 2008
School's unique reference number:	117402
Headteacher:	Mrs Jessica Balado
Inspector's name and number:	Mrs Lizzie McWhirter MA 244

School context

Little Munden primary school serves Dane End and its surrounding villages. It is a small rural primary where pupils are almost all from a White British background. The headteacher has been in post since September 2008 and is building up a strong team around her.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Little Munden as a Church of England school are good.

Little Munden is a good church school which is valued by everyone. Pupils trust their teachers and value their friends. It is a place where everyone is welcomed and all are encouraged to reach their full potential.

Established strengths

- The strong links between the school, church and community
- The positive attitudes of pupils to all aspects of school life and learning
- The opportunities offered to pupils in collective worship

Focus for development

- Put in place an effective system of monitoring and evaluation for everyone to contribute to, underpinning Christian values
- Embed the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship by including pupils and governors more systematically in the use of reflective journals
- Engage pupils in the planning and development of reflection areas, both inside and outside the classroom

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

Little Munden is an inclusive, cohesive community which is much loved by its pupils and much appreciated by its parent body. Here is a place where individuals matter, exemplary relationships are nurtured, and all feel valued and listened to. A good example of this is the care older pupils show to younger ones. Parents say their children look forward to coming to school and enthuse about school life when they come home. They acknowledge the school provides 'spiritual guidance in a very happy environment' and state well-being as a strength of the school. Pupils say they really value the teachers who make learning fun, as well as their friends. One pupil spoke of 'the teachers who take care of me and look out for me.' Another pupil noted the work of the governors to 'make the school a safer and better place.' School fundraising enables the pupils to experience the Christian values of service and gratitude. Through collective worship and religious education [RE], pupils understand they belong to a church school in which they feel secure and where Christian values are promoted. Opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect and this has a positive impact on behaviour. The school is seen to value the widest range of achievement so that attitudes to learning are positive. RE contributes to pupils' spiritual development, and is enhanced by bright, prominent displays. A good example of this is 'The Walk to Church' corridor which currently highlights pupils' reflections on Bible stories and has a focus on the significance of the cross. Pupils clearly enjoy RE and show good knowledge of Christianity as well as other faith traditions, such as Hinduism and Judaism. Culture weeks such as India Week assist pupils' vision of what it means to be part of a worldwide community of faith. Pupils are keen to be involved in the planning and development of reflection areas, both inside and outside the school; where they can 'sit awhile, rest and smile' and create a 'thinking place' to think and pray to God.

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

Worship clearly engages pupils and is making a real difference in their lives. Pupils say they enjoy drama, story, music and prayer in worship. They 'enjoy prayer' and like writing their own prayers for use in worship. They also 'like praising God and singing' as well as 'listening quietly and thinking about things, asking God for help'. One pupil recalled the two minutes silence on Armistice Day. Children are clear about what forgiveness means in practice when praying The Lord's Prayer. One pupil spoke of the importance of 'letting go and being forgiven'. The Anglican clergy are welcome visitors to school. Children enjoy and remember the Bible stories the vicar shares in worship, which enable them to encounter Jesus. A good example of this is the healing of blind Bartimaeus, where pupils spoke of the importance of letting other people help you. Pupils enjoy 'all going to church as a school and having services'. This happens at special times in the church year such as Harvest, Christmas and Easter. One school council member remarked that it was good that governors attend church services. The school is keen to develop its links further with the parish church, celebrating its Anglican heritage. Pupils are keen to be more involved in the planning and leading of worship. The school has begun the work of pupils' participation in the evaluation of worship. This is still in its early stages. The school seeks to incorporate the use of reflective journals to capture pupil thoughts for governors and staff to read and act upon. The pupils also acknowledge the importance of sharing these thoughts with the school council. In these ways the profile of worship is being raised and worship is continuing to improve in integrity, style and content, enhancing pupils' spiritual development

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

The headteacher, foundation governors and vicar all have a shared desire to uphold and further strengthen the Christian vision of the school. They are very committed to the school, its Anglican foundation and mission to the local community; above all caring for its pupils and the families it serves. As a result, pupils are very clear that Little Munden is a church school, and are equipped with the tools for prayer and worship. Parents find staff approachable and value the vicar's regular contact with the school, commenting 'he is absolutely excellent at pitching services, making them fun and including the children'. Pupils have an opportunity to make their voice heard through the school council and in other ways.

Foundation governors are making a difference through their involvement with the school, and are open to new ways of taking the school forward, especially in their monitoring and evaluative role. Progress has been made in the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship, but is not yet fully realised. The headteacher, with support from the foundation governors and senior staff, has worked hard to address areas from the previous inspection in terms of the school's Christian character as well as distinctively Christian worship, honouring the Anglican tradition. The school has fully involved everyone in looking afresh at the school's vision and values, but the monitoring and evaluation of this has yet to be embedded. There is much potential in the development of links between the school and parish, embracing the close ties that exist between them, namely through the incumbent. The school features in the parish newsletter and pupils' work is displayed in church, thus keeping the school's profile in the village high. The school welcomes support from the diocese so that the school's Anglican foundation can be upheld by all. A good example of this is the enthusiasm displayed in the early planning stages of the 2011 celebrations to be held at The Abbey.

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SIAS report January 2011, Little Munden VC Primary, Dane End, Ware, Herts SG12 0NR