

Cavendish Church of England VC Primary School

The Green
Cavendish
Suffolk
CO10 8BA

Diocese: St Edmundsbury & Ipswich

Local authority: Suffolk
Dates of inspection: 14th & 15th May, 2007
Date of last inspection: October, 2002
School's unique reference number: 124693

Headteacher: Mrs Gillian F Garrett-Moore
Inspector's name and number: Mrs D Lenton 460

School context

Cavendish Church of England Primary is a small village school. At present it has 52 pupils. Approximately 50% come from the village of Cavendish with the rest travelling from several of the surrounding villages. At present all the pupils come from White British backgrounds.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Cavendish Church of England VC Primary as a Church of England school are good

Cavendish Church of England School has a strong, distinctive Christian identity. It is a dynamic and caring community, where all are valued. It is very effective at encouraging all the children and adults to have a positive approach to teaching and learning. The school is well supported as a church school by the governing body, and is of central importance to the local community.

Established strengths

- The Christian ethos that is reflected in all relationships within the school community
- The strong link with the local church and community
- The leadership of the head teacher
- The quality and breadth of the extended curriculum, particularly music

Focus for development

- To develop children's spiritual awareness, finding opportunities to note important milestones in their growing awareness
- To raise the profile of the strong link with the local church
- To provide opportunities, with the help of the Diocese, for staff and Foundation Governors to explore more fully what it means to be a church school

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

This lively school radiates a strong Christian ethos in all that it does. Christian values are evident in the way that adults and children work together in an atmosphere of respect and love. The staff are excellent role models for the children. They demonstrate the Christian

characteristics of patience, kindness and forgiveness. Sensitive issues are handled well, particularly through the use of drama. The children are confident and have high self-esteem. The newly formed School Council confirms this: "We don't swear or bully and if someone is being difficult we invite them to play with us." The Friendship bench is used well in the playground. Behaviour is very good. The children's own clear rules of good behaviour are displayed in the classrooms. Teachers provide children with thinking time if they are finding something difficult. The use of a Worry Box provides a good opportunity for children to record, anonymously, their concerns. These issues are later discussed in Circle Time. Children's achievements are celebrated well in this school. The head teacher's excellent method of noting children's individual achievements, for academic success, for effort and good behaviour, are recorded in a file. The award received for this recognition is held in high esteem.

The children with special educational needs were seen to be thriving in this school. Children who had transferred from other schools because of behavioural difficulties were seen to be working hard and showing pride in their achievements.

There is a very good relationship between the school and parents. The parents feel that the school is very open and friendly and explained that they could approach any member of staff if they had any concerns.

Parents are particularly impressed with the nurturing aspect of the school: one in which children's individual strengths are picked up and developed. All the children are encouraged to play the recorder from ear right from the beginning. The children observed at the early morning recorder club were quick to pick up new tunes and showed enthusiasm and considerable skill. The school has an excellent attitude of "you can do it" towards music. Most children respond well to this and they learn mainly Christian songs and hymns that they play in Collective Worship.

The local Rector has an excellent relationship with the staff, as well as the children, and spends time talking to the staff informally after school on Friday afternoons about the life of the school and their personal concerns.

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

Acts of worship in the school are well planned and staff commented that this is a very important aspect of school life. All members of staff lead worship. The very good Collective Worship observed was held in the local parish church to celebrate Jesus' ascension into heaven. All the children were involved in leading this act of worship through singing, reading from the Bible and saying prayers. This they did well and with enthusiasm. All the village community is invited to these school services and this one was well attended. There was a real sense of worship and celebration. One girl commented that, "Assembly is fun. You learn about things you didn't know about. You get involved." There is a real opportunity here for the school to develop children as confident worship leaders, particularly within the school setting. The school uses the church building well for several Christian festivals throughout the school year, such as Easter. It is also used for the leavers' service. Most children enjoy singing in Collective Worship but they also appreciate times of quiet too. Children seek out areas in which they can be reflective. "I like sitting under the shady tree to think," one boy said. The impact of CW, observed away from the actual times of worship, was good. Children spoken to and observed were reflective and talked about how they prayed away from the school for friends, family and for themselves. One child said that he wrote prayers to "say by myself. They are secrets between me and God." The school uses Bible stories well to give children practical and relevant ways in which they can make moral choices. The children are very aware of right and wrong.

There are many good opportunities for children's spiritual development. They are encouraged, for example, to write their own prayers at the beginning of the school day to read to themselves when they have a quiet moment. Children were also seen enjoying looking at pictures in the Bible that is displayed in the entrance. The school, while acknowledging these moments as important in a child's spiritual development, has not yet developed a more formal monitoring procedure to reflect this.

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

The head teacher provides good leadership in the school. She, with her team of committed staff, give the school its energy, enthusiasm and its effectiveness as a Christian community. The Foundation governors, working closely with the head teacher, provide a strong support for the school and act as a critical friend, particularly in helping the school to develop its aims. They have considered carefully their Mission Statement and have worked with the school to provide a good, clear vision about what it means to belong to a Church school. This vision is expressed in the form of statements of aims, and these are displayed in the school's entrance and are to be included in the new school brochure. The Foundation governors' desire to develop a closer understanding of what it means to be a Church school reflects their commitment to the school. They have an active and positive role within the school - through monitoring the curriculum and through practical help on field and residential trips, for example. One governor provides a good link with the local church congregation by also being a member of the Parochial Church Council. The PCC regularly prays for the school, and the school is always mentioned in the parish magazine. There is a good relationship between the head teacher and the local rector, who together provide strong Christian leadership.

There is a strong sense in which the school has a very important part to play in the community. The children visit elderly members of the community to sing, for example. Many of the school's activities, such as sports day, actually take place on the village green. There is also a good link with the local play-group through one of the parents who works there.

Some evidence of provision to introduce the children to other faiths and cultures was seen in the form of displays. There was a Sikh display in the hall, for example. The religious festival chart is a good method of keeping track of major religious festivals throughout the year.