



Diocese of
St Edmundsbury & Ipswich

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Cookley & Walpole Church of England VC Primary School

Walpole
Suffolk
IP19 9AT

Diocese: St. Edmundsbury & Ipswich
Local authority: Suffolk
Dates of inspection: June 19th 2007
Date of last inspection: 13th & 15th May 2002
School's unique reference number: 124726
Headteacher: Miss A Corrie
Inspector's name and number: Mrs G Hipwell 480

School context

This is a very small school of 24 pupils, aged 4-9, with significantly more boys than girls. There are two classes. 14 children are on the SEN register, none with a statement. The school serves two parishes with very different church traditions. The pupils come from a wide geographical area; currently no pupils live in Cookley and two in Walpole. There is an independent pre-school on site each morning with good links to the school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Cookley & Walpole VC Primary as a Church of England school are good

Attitudes and values in the school are confidently Christian. A very high value is put upon the quality of relationships and every child is loved as an individual. Collective worship plays a central role in nurturing and developing a community where everyone feels important. Strong leadership from the Headteacher and the clergy is developing the school's confidence in its Christian identity.

Established strengths

- Very strong support from local clergy for collective worship and beyond
- A culture of respect for all
- A clear and joyous Christian focus in collective worship

Focus for development

- A strategy to clarify and develop the role of the foundation governors in monitoring and evaluating collective worship
- The establishment of a strong governing body to support the vision and purpose of the school
- The development of good and supportive links with the Walpole church family
- An effective demonstration of the school's pride in its Christian ethos as communicated through the brochure and the school environment

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

Children are encouraged to be individuals and confidently identify their own interests and talents as well as those of others. They work to individual targets, encouraging and praising each other. They are encouraged to take responsibility on the school council or the eco-council. They describe their school as 'a happy place' where 'everyone knows everyone else' and there is 'no bullying'. In group discussion they listened to each other, respecting points of view. When asked about Christian values in their school they identified forgiveness, kindness to others and looking after weaker people as the most important. They said that these are 'part of knowing what Jesus would do'. They knew that theirs is a church school and spoke very warmly of both ministers. There is considerable opportunity to reflect upon beliefs and values, supported by a well planned religious education programme and well-structured collective worship, and reinforced by staff throughout the day. Relationships are exceptionally good, warm and respectful and built on trust. Staff and pupils support each other and value each others' roles. Displays around the building are attractive and reflect the efforts of every child. There are a number of displays on religious themes but no items particularly reflecting the Christian foundation of the school, although there have been discussions about a cross made by the school community and a liturgical clock. The school has made great use of its outdoor spaces, with opportunities for pupils to grow vegetables for the school kitchen and areas for quiet reflection as well as energetic play. One six year old boy said 'mostly I like to run around but sometimes I like to sit and think'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Pupils look forward to collective worship and identify very clearly the different ways that this is presented by different teachers and the two clergy. They were able to remember specific acts of worship and relate both the content and the message. They have a high level of involvement and obviously enjoy taking part. All pupils and teachers attend all collective worship and it is distinct from the family assembly which has a separate slot. The content of collective worship is distinctively Christian and follows the liturgical year; an excellent and interactive explanation of the Trinity was observed. The school prayer is used daily and the Lord's Prayer is displayed and explained in the hall. Pupils enjoy singing and are learning to sign some of the songs. A new planning process includes members of staff and both of the clergy who regularly visit. Planning and recording is good but monitoring is less well developed. The role of foundation governors in this area is not developed but this has been identified as an issue on the school improvement plan. The wholly Christian nature of collective worship is not consistently expressed in documentation. Music is used at the start of collective worship, described by one pupil as 'making everyone calm' but there is not, at present, a physical focus. The congregation at Cookley have undertaken to provide a worship table with appropriate liturgical cloths. The school uses three churches for special celebrations, inviting parents, governors and the church families.

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

Excellent support from the incumbent at Cookley, who took over as Chair of Governors in the spring, has given the head teacher renewed confidence in further developing the distinctiveness and Christian vision of the school. Their relationship is excellent and is proving extremely effective in moving the school forward. Church school distinctiveness items are included on the agenda of governors' meetings. Practice is already good but this is not consistently supported or reinforced by the quality of documentation, particularly the school brochure. Members of staff support and actively promote the school's Christian values. Parishioners at Cookley take a keen interest in the school, although there are currently no Cookley children on roll, and provide financial support for transport for church visits as well as collective worship materials. The school visits three churches for services and activities days. The newly appointed minister with pastoral responsibility for Walpole has developed good personal links with the school and is committed to developing a stronger relationship between the school and the church family in Walpole. Both ministers support the school in a variety of ways and have begun to work together to provide excellent Christian support through collective worship, pastoral care for both staff and pupils and practical service. The chair of governors has identified the need for a more pro-active governing body and has

begun to recruit new members. At present there is no foundation governor from Walpole and vacancies for two parent governors. There is an active parents' association and the family assemblies are well supported but the school has had to work hard to involve all parents

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