

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

East Bergholt Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School

School Lane
East Bergholt
COLCHESTER
CO7 6SW

Diocese of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich

Suffolk Local Education Authority
Date of inspection: 11th December 2006
Date of last inspection: S23 Inspection June 2001
School's unique reference number: 124729
Headteacher: Jan Seabourne
SIAS Inspector's name and number: Marika Mears

School Context

East Bergholt is an average sized rural primary school of 181 pupils. Its pupils are drawn from the immediate area. Attainment on entry is slightly above average. The majority of pupils are white British heritage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and also those with learning difficulties are below national averages when compared with similar sized schools. The Head Teacher and Governors have carried out a thorough review of the school using the Diocesan Church School Self-evaluation materials. This has given a perceptive and accurate picture of the school.

Summary Judgement

This is a good Church school with a distinctive Christian ethos and some outstanding features. It offers a high standard of care for its pupils, who are valued as individuals, within a Christian community. A wide range of extra-curricular activities enhance the curricular opportunities that the school provides to promote pupils' learning.

Established Strengths

- The clear vision of the Head Teacher and the partnership with the Governing Body ensures high standards within a secure and caring Christian environment.
- The dedication of the Head Teacher and staff team to create a very attractive and stimulating learning environment, both in and around the school.
- The relationships between staff and learners, among learners and between staff are valued and respected.
- The dedicated and collaborative staff team, all making an effective contribution to the school and reflecting Christian values.
- Learners know and appreciate what it means to be part of a Church school.

Focus for Development

- Construct a policy for Spiritual Development that will encourage consistent spiritual growth for all learners.
- Include information about the school as a Church school and details of the Collective Worship Policy within the school prospectus.
- Strengthen and broaden the existing links with the local Church, particularly as a new Head Teacher and new Rector will be taking up posts in the near future.

Distinctive Christian Character

The impact of the school's distinctive character is good, with some outstanding features. Pupils, parents and staff place high value upon good relationships within the school and pupils proudly state that there are no examples of bad behaviour or bullying within the school. Pupils' behaviour and manners are outstanding as shown during the Mince Pie Party for the over 60's in the community. Pupils greeted and welcomed their visitors, served them with refreshments and chatted to them whilst waiting for the Nativity Play to begin – all in a very comfortable and confident manner. The whole school community exudes a warm, friendly and caring ethos in a very happy and vibrant atmosphere. The school prospectus does not describe fully the value the school places on its Christian Faith.

The school's commitment to develop the whole child, expressed in its written aims, is realised in its practice. The school has developed personalised learning for its pupils, including pupils with Special Educational Needs and Gifted and Talented pupils, ensuring its practice is inclusive. There is a strong sense of community, as exemplified by the support for families with very sick children in the school community.

The School Council develops the pupils' sense of responsibility for others and for the school environment. Members of the School Council described how they became involved in fund raising for various causes, ranging from the provision of school equipment to supporting a community in Uganda. They talked animatedly about the school's "Taking Part" scheme and "Buddy System" which enables older pupils to become involved in caring for younger pupils and the wider school community. The school has developed innovative links with various groups to provide exciting cross curricular links, enhancing both community and global development. These involve growing food, developing the school grounds, arts programmes and working with a local commune.

The school uses the whole environment to enable the spiritual development of learners to take place. Displays provide the opportunity for interaction, reflection and inspiration. The outdoor environment, developed through pupil consultation, provides similar opportunities for spiritual development. However there is no policy for Spiritual Development, and no provision for monitoring the consistent spiritual growth of all learners.

What is the impact of Collective Worship on the school community

The impact of Collective Worship on the school community is good and makes a significant contribution to the daily lives of learners. Displays in the school hall remind all learners of the themes for Collective Worship, and of past worship opportunities.

The act of worship seen provided opportunities for all pupils to be involved by linking events in school (a new Head Teacher appointment), to the birth of a new baby (during Advent) and finding desirable characteristics of each. Children speak very positively about the Assistant Rector and the local Reader in Church leading an act of Collective Worship weekly, both in Church and in school. They describe how the sermons and stories related to their daily lives and inspire them to help and care for others. Parents describe how children talk about what

they have learned during Collective Worship and confidently explain Christian values and how they are similar to those of other world faiths. Collective worship takes a variety of forms and styles, ensuring that all learners are actively involved. There is scope to broaden existing links with the local Church, and build on the good relationships already established.

All members of staff lead collective worship, reflecting positively on its significance for the school's Christian ethos. Parents value the opportunity to join in with individual classes for Collective Worship. The quiet music at the start and end of Collective Worship is used to promote a calm, spiritual atmosphere, enabling the pupils to respond in a respectful, personal manner through reflection, sung praise and prayer. The Reader observed that the link between the school and Church was strengthened by pupils visiting the Church monthly for Collective Worship, accompanied by other family members. Members of the Church run a Holiday Play Scheme in school, culminating in a service in Church: both pupils and parents spoke about this with enthusiasm. The school uses Bible stories, prayers, hymns and Christian festivals to ensure that pupils have a broad understanding of Anglican faith and practice.

How effective are the Leadership and Management of the school as a Church school?

The leadership and management of this Church school is good. The Head Teacher has an open, collaborative style of leadership and has built a strong staff team who share her commitment to enhancing the National Curriculum through the provision of a variety of high quality cross curricular and extra curricular activities. The Governing Body supports and challenges the work of the staff team by establishing secure self-evaluation systems, which have enabled school improvement. The impact of this is evident following recent concerns raised by a decline in standards at Key Stage 2. The wider Church community is encouraged to support the school and pupils experience good role models from adults who live out their Christian life in practice.

Parents comment upon the way in which the Head Teacher and Governing Body ensure that Christian values are developed and enhanced within school. They feel that these values impact positively on learners, through the work of the Head Teacher and staff team, by providing a strong sense of community identity, a caring ethos and appropriate levels of responsibility together with a very well-rounded education. Parents feel that these Christian qualities make the school a special place which promotes development of the whole child. The RE coordinator is working closely with the Local Education Authority, the Diocese, the Staff Team and the Governing Body to develop the teaching of Religious Education. The vision is to link RE teaching to Collective Worship, Church Festivals, World Religions and make each of these more relevant to the daily lives of pupils within a Christian context. Resources allocated to support RE teaching are very high.

There is a strong partnership between the school, Church and the local community. Community groups have many opportunities to take part in school events. Regular visits by pupils to the local Church have increased attendance at Sunday worship, and local people look forward to seeing pupils walk to Church once a month. There are opportunities for all stakeholders to be involved in school self evaluation through discussions, working groups, interviews and questionnaires.