



The Diocese of St Edmundsbury
and Ipswich



Hopton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Thelnetham Road
Hopton
Diss
IP22 2QY
Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich
Suffolk LEA
Date of Previous Inspection 1997
Dates of Inspection: 27th March
Unique Reference Number 124703
Headteacher: Mrs H Harding
Inspector's Name and NS Number Mr E Green (NS 267)

Hopton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is a smaller than average Church of England Voluntary Controlled school situated about nine miles west of Diss. The school caters for 75 pupils aged 4 to 9; there are three classes. The school serves the local villages of Hopton, Market Weston, Thelnetham and Hepworth. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is very low and there are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Hopton School as a Church of England Primary School is outstanding.

Christian values and Christ centred worship underpins all aspects of school life. These Christian values, which are put into action so effectively, contribute to a strong Christian ethos which permeates the whole school and makes a marked contribution to allowing all pupils to fully develop and achieve their potential. There is an excellent working relationship between the school, the church and the community.

Established Strengths

- Excellent links with the local Anglican Church, Chapel and community.
- A caring and inclusive ethos based on Christian Values
- Strong and effective leadership by the headteacher and governing body.

Focus for Development

- To involve the pupils in the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship.
- To implement an induction programme for all staff that reflects what is 'distinctive' about Hopton as a Church of England controlled school.

The way in which the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meets the needs of all learners is outstanding.

The school places great importance on all aspects of each pupil's personal development and has high expectations of all its pupils. Pupils care for each other and work together well; they are confident and secure in a friendly, caring and supportive learning environment. Pupils speak of feeling valued, listened to and being able to make a positive contribution to the life of the school. They acknowledge and understand how the Christian values which the school promotes so well impact on the whole of their school life. For example, they understand the need to forgive and be forgiven and they talk of further Christian values such as respect and love for all and how these can be integrated into school life. The 'buddy programme' has been so successful that pupils decided there was no need for it to continue next term! School and individual achievements are celebrated every week – nominated children have their photographs displayed. Less able and gifted pupils are extremely well catered for through the provision of individual education plans and support staff. Good relationships, characterised by Christian values such as care, concern, love and forgiveness exist throughout the school and all members of the school community appreciate this. The views of pupils are taken into account through, for example, circle time, questionnaires, working lunches with the head and the school council. Commitment to Christian values in action has seen the school raise a significant amount of money, and support a number of charities such as, Unicef and 'Jeans for Genes'. With the support of staff, parents and the local Christian community the school is able to run a number of extra curricular activities including a very well attended Christian club. The pupils talk of the enjoyment and benefit of these clubs. Excellent use is made of the school environment – inside and out. There are stimulating, questioning wall displays which children can add to with 'post it' notes and outside there are various areas for creative play as well as a designated quiet area. Relationships within the school are excellent. The school is progressing towards achieving National Healthy School status in September 2007.

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

Christ centred collective worship begins each school day; it is attended not only by all pupils but most of the staff. There is a regular pattern of visitors to lead worship – worship leaders include local clergy from the parishes served by the school and representatives from the village chapel. Good use is made in the acts of worship of traditional and Anglican prayers. The Lord's Prayer is used on a regular basis. The school makes excellent use of a portable worship cupboard as a focus for worship – on the cupboard there is a cross, a prayer book and the fish symbol. A coloured candle is lit at the beginning of each act of worship – the colour of the candle changing according to the church's year. Pupils were very aware of the symbolism. The daily act of worship is seen as a time of day for all the school to be together for quiet prayer, song, thought and reflection. Worship is very well planned and organised and good detailed records are kept. The pupils are involved in the worship – they help choose the songs and music and each class leads a time of worship each term. The school is already exploring how this involvement can be further advanced. The pupils greatly enjoy collective worship – they are interested and responsive and participate readily in the school's worship time. They can readily recount stories they have heard, dramas they have seen acted out and they understand why, for example, the Easter story is so important to Christians. Pupils have an opportunity to comment on collective worship through the school's established evaluation procedures. The school observes all the major festivals of the church's year and holds services in the Parish Church to mark these festivals; these are well attended by parents and the rest of the community.

The leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding. There is an excellent working relationship between the Chair of the Governing Body, the two clergy Foundation Governors, the rest of the governing body and the headteacher – this is vital to the effective leadership of the school as a church school. This very good relationship is also evident in the way that the school, church and community support each other through, for example, prayer, writing articles for the parish magazine, service planning and joint fund raising. The school also regularly visits the village's 'Home from Home' club for senior citizens, The foundation governors and other governors are aware of the school's Christian foundation and purpose, which are made clear in the school prospectus and the school's statement of aims, which were drawn up by all stakeholders. They work with the headteacher to make the school's Christian vision and foundation clear, from ensuring that the school notepaper makes clear that Hopton is a Church of England school to seeing that this vision is also incorporated into the school development plan. All prospective employees are made aware of the school's Christian ethos and values. The governing body has in place a rigorous monitoring system and Foundation Governors know that part of their role is to be involved in monitoring and evaluating the 'distinctiveness' of the school as a church school. Parents are very supportive of the school – there is an active 'Friends of Hopton school'. Parents, pupils and staff are given an opportunity to become involved through the use of questionnaires and consultation. Staff feel valued and the school has in place both performance management and well being schemes for staff.