



<p><b>Name and address of school</b>          St Edmundsbury CEVAP School          Grove Road          Bury St Edmunds          Suffolk          IP33 3BJ</p> <p><b>Type of school</b>          Primary</p> <p><b>Status</b>          Voluntary Aided</p> <p><b>Diocese</b>          St Edmundsbury and Ipswich</p> <p><b>LEA</b>          Suffolk</p>	<p><b>Date of inspection</b>          7 March 2007</p> <p><b>Date of last inspection</b>          13 / 14 June 2001</p> <p><b>School's unique reference number</b>          124762</p> <p><b>Name of Headteacher</b>          Mrs Anne Evans</p> <p><b>Name of Inspector</b>          Simon Windmill</p> <p><b>NS number</b>          182</p>
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#### **Context**

St Edmundsbury Church of England VA primary school is an average sized primary school serving an urban area in Bury St Edmunds. It has good links with the local parish church. Most pupils come from white British backgrounds. The number of pupils with disabilities or learning difficulties is slightly lower than average.

#### **Summary Judgement**

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Edmundsbury as a Church of England school are good.**

The school's Christian ethos is evident throughout the school. It is reflected in the caring and supportive relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils' personal development and behaviour are good, and they enjoy learning within a stimulating, caring and safe atmosphere.

#### **Established strengths**

- Relationships within and between staff and pupils, who feel valued and special through the care and nurture they receive
- Links with the local church and wider community
- The high standard of RE teaching

#### **Focus for development**

- Develop a policy for encouraging Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development
- Give pupils opportunities to write and read their own prayers in Collective Worship and at other times
- Increase governors' involvement in monitoring and evaluating the impact of Collective Worship on the life of the school

**The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good in meeting the needs of all pupils.**

Care and support for pupils and staff is outstanding, being given to pupils of all abilities, faiths and cultures. The school's Christian ethos is good, being soundly based on Christian values which influence the whole life of the school. This is seen in the school's warm, welcoming, inclusive and friendly atmosphere, which parents value highly, with around 90% of parents expressing this in surveys. It is also reflected in the high quality of relationships within the school. Pupils learn from the good role models of staff and other adults, which helps pupils develop self confidence and independence. The school's Investors in People award was renewed in 2005. Pupils' behaviour is good. This is because they are involved in setting the rules for their class, and therefore respect them and understand the consequences if rules are broken.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong. The headteacher, staff and governors see spiritual and moral development as a vital part of pupils' learning, and encourage this by giving pupils opportunities for reflection, in Collective Worship and the wider curriculum. Pupils' awareness and concern for the needs of others is encouraged through Circle Time and a Buddy system, and is reflected in their generous contributions to charitable causes, such as National Children's Homes, Samaritan's Purse, and sponsoring a child through Action Aid. This also adds to pupils' knowledge and understanding of different faiths and cultures around the world – for example through a link with a Diocese in Tanzania. An effective School Council gives pupils a say in running the school. An Environment Club raises pupils' awareness of the need to look after the environment.

The Christian identity of the school is visible in many ways, such as crosses, candles, a prayer table for pupils to put their own prayers, a Christian Mission Statement in the prospectus, and lively Christian displays and prayers around the school.

**The impact of Collective Worship on the school community is good.**

Collective Worship is seen as the focal point of each day by the headteacher and staff, and has a strong, positive impact on school life. It is soundly based on the Christian gospel. It begins with the greeting and response 'Peace be with you'... 'and with you', and always includes singing, teaching and time for prayer and reflection. Staff lead worship well, and sometimes visitors from local churches lead – for example, the Vicar and other governors. Pupils enjoy worship and join in enthusiastically, especially in singing, and when they have a part to play in it, such as acting out a story or reading a poem. The school regularly seeks pupils' views on worship, and take them into account when planning worship. Pupils understand a range of purposes and styles of prayer. They know the Lord's Prayer, which is sometimes said during worship.

Worship is well planned, with a theme for each week. It also reflects the church year. Records of worship are kept, with feedback from pupils, but worship is not systematically monitored and evaluated to assess its impact on pupils. The parish and other local churches are used for special services such as Advent and Easter, and some pupils take part in the Cathedral's Harvest Festival. The wider community is invited to special services, and the Christmas production was particularly well received by the community, with comments such as "It put Christ back into Christmas". Pupils of other faiths usually take part in Collective Worship, and all are given the opportunity to make prayer their own by saying 'Amen'. Prayers are said at other times in the school day, such as grace before lunch. Pupils would like to write and read their own prayers and build them up into a collection to use in Collective Worship. When asked, one pupil said "I'd absolutely love to do that!".

### **The effectiveness of Religious Education is good.**

Religious Education is well planned and taught, based on the Suffolk scheme. Lesson plans are thorough, with appropriate learning objectives allowing for the differing needs and abilities of different pupils. Teachers regularly assess the work of pupils, and use the assessments for planning future teaching and learning. The majority of pupils achieve above average standards in Religious Education, and make good progress.

Pupils enjoy Religious Education lessons and take an active part in them. They are encouraged to share their own views, and speak willingly and openly of their own beliefs, while being tolerant of the views of others. Teachers are aware of the needs and levels of understanding of pupils, and tailor lessons appropriately – for example a lesson dealing with the difficult subject of death was handled with great sensitivity.

A range of teaching techniques are used, such as role play, story telling, and Godly play, which are used effectively in helping pupils to explore and express their own feelings. A wide range of learning activities is used, such as written work, discussion, art, and so on. The pace of lessons is good, and also allows time for reflection when appropriate.

Religious Education contributes well to pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development. Opportunities for such development are planned into the lessons, and pupils respond readily. They have a good understanding of the Anglican faith and traditions, which is also reflected in Collective Worship.

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

The Headteacher and governors give good leadership to the school. Many governors spend time in the school helping in various ways, so they have a good understanding and knowledge of the school. Staff are very positive about the school's leadership and management. They feel valued by the leadership team, and welcome the importance placed on maintaining staff well-being.

The leadership team works well to promote a distinctive and active Christian vision for the school, and Christian values underpin the school's life and work. This is reflected in the school development plan, and is emphasised when new staff are recruited. Parents and members of the wider community speak very highly of the family atmosphere generated through the school's caring relationships, and are very happy with the school. They feel well informed about the school's activities, and enjoy the fact that they are positively encouraged to get involved in school life in a number of ways, for example as classroom helpers, after school clubs or fundraising.

Links with several other churches and the wider community are good. Clergy and other church members contribute to Collective Worship and other school activities, such as running holiday activities for pupils. The school hall is used for Sunday worship by an Indian Christian group. The school regularly contributes to the parish magazine. The school does not yet have a policy for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development, which limits the extent to which staff and governors have a shared understanding and vision of how to encourage such development within the whole curriculum.