

***Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools
Report for Eynesbury Church of England
Voluntary Controlled Primary School,
Eynesbury
Diocese of Ely***



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of
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Name and address of school – Eynesbury CEVC Primary School,
Montague Street
Eynesbury
St. Neots.
Cambridgeshire.
PE19 2TD

Type of school - Primary

Status – Voluntary Controlled

Diocese – Ely

LEA - Cambridgeshire

Dates of inspection – 1st and 2nd May 2007

Date of last inspection – 9th June 2003

School's Unique reference number - 110820

Name of Acting Headteacher – Mrs. Theresa Thornton

Headteacher: - Mrs. Helen Rouse

Inspector's name with National Society inspector's number – Mrs S Metcalfe – 249

School context

Eynesbury school is a modern primary school, with a very recent, purpose - built nursery, on the outskirts of, St. Neots, in Cambridgeshire. Most of the 247 pupils come from the village, though a few come from out of the catchment area. The majority of pupils come from white, British backgrounds, though there are a small number from different ethnic backgrounds. Only a few of these have English as an additional language. There are no pupils at an early stage of learning English. The school is set in extensive grounds that have been well adapted to provide an outdoor classroom, a willow dome and walk, a wildlife area and an outdoor theatre. The school was led by an acting headteacher at the time of the inspection.

Summary Judgement

Eynesbury Church of England school is a good Church of England school that effectively meets the needs of all learners through its distinctive Christian character. The school environment is outstanding in encouraging pupil's spiritual development.

Established strengths

The acting headteacher is very effectively continuing to build on the excellent work of the headteacher while Mrs Rouse is on maternity leave. She gives good direction to the school as a Christian community. The atmosphere in the school is very positive and gives outstanding support to the spiritual development of all pupils, staff and the parents and volunteers who offer their services in class and with the many clubs run after school. The Chair of the governing body is very supportive and also shows a good, clear Christian vision for the school. He, along with other governors, encourages, monitors and challenges the school to realise this vision. Children feel special and valued, are secure, happy and flourish whether in class or about the school.

Focus for development

The school has already identified key areas for development to move the school further forward, with which the inspector agrees:

- To review the school's mission statement to ensure it is understood by all and prominently displayed about the school
- To develop the role of worship in the life of the school through further training and pupil involvement
- To make positive links with representatives from other Christian denominations

to which should be added:

- Ensure that the diocese is aware of weaknesses in the pastoral and clerical support offered to the school since the incumbent's illness and so build stronger, mutually supportive, links between the school and the parish ministry team.

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

Spiritual, moral and social provision is outstanding for pupils. Virtually all have high levels of self-esteem, feel valued and special and generally enjoy their work whatever their abilities. Since the illness of the vicar meant that the local church withdrew from active participation in the school, it has become a particular focus for the headteacher, the acting headteacher and staff along with the encouraging support of the governors. Pupils see the school as very supportive of their personal development as well as of their academic progress. Their levels of maturity and independence are high and they willingly support others, especially in the playground and through raising funds for charity. Their successes, in and out of school, are celebrated and rewarded very effectively in Friday assemblies. Pupils who are elected as members of the School Council enjoy their responsibilities and take their role seriously. They present ideas to the school's senior managers such as on playground markings and new play equipment. This is a very effective way for pupils to learn about social living and democracy.

The school environment is outstanding as a support to the development of pupils as spiritual beings. Not only are obvious symbols of the Christian faith about the building, but classrooms also have displays from the faith under study in Religious Education. For instance, the year 1 classroom has a corner laid out in the style of the local church and at least one pupil has taken himself inside the 'church' for a quiet time-out session rather than getting stressed within the main room. Pupils' recordings of visits to places of worship are displayed about the school, being very carefully selected and mounted, showing how staff value pupils' efforts. The hall is likewise given a Christian focus during collective worship with the use of a display of the Cross, the candle for prayer-time and the Bible. The outside of the school is outstanding as a source of spiritual encouragement. From the wildlife area to the willow dome and walk, great care has been taken to provide an environment that encourages spiritual reflection as well as social and ecological thought and care. The outside classroom is particularly effective during PSHCE sessions, as is the outside theatre.

Provision is outstanding for pupils having difficulties with their behaviour or for those with a special educational need. Parents are very appreciative of the support their children receive. Relationships within the school community are exemplary. Pupils and their parents feel very happy to discuss any problems and good systems are in place to guide pupils' progress. The school is now reviewing the mission statement to encapsulate the Christian focus of the School Code. The Code itself is clearly written and well displayed about the school, in all documentation for parents and in classrooms in pupil-friendly language. This encapsulates all that this Church of England school stands for.

As pupils said when asked to sum up the school: *"We like this school, we enjoy coming"*

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The school has made good progress in moving the standard of collective worship from satisfactory at the previous inspection to good now. Through reviewing the policy for collective worship, encouraging more pupil participation and monitoring and evaluating the Assembly programme, senior staff have identified strengths and planned training. This good practice has ensured that as staff confidence has grown, pupil's involvement has developed further. Pupils now are monitors working the sound system and setting up the hall. They write and read prayers, take part in dramatic excerpts, answer questions and join in the singing as well as share their musical expertise via orchestral contributions. Collective worship is becoming a focal point of school life and contributes very well to the development of pupils as thinking, spiritual beings. There is, however, much less involvement in collective worship by the local vicar than at the time of the previous inspection, due to his illness. Recently, weekly acts of worship for younger pupils have been established by the church, led by a senior deaconess, and these are appreciated by staff and pupils alike. The vicar is happy to welcome the school into the parish church and gives his support to special services such as the leavers' service and to assist pupils work in Religious Education

Collective worship impacts positively on all the work of the school community. Worship is consistently and recognisably Christian, following the school's Anglican tradition. Acts of worship are consistently well planned and imaginative. Candles, Crosses and Bibles along with posters, artefacts, pictures and books are used well to help pupils focus on the specialness of collective worship to the school. As pupils enter and leave the hall music helps establish a spiritual atmosphere. Pupils know a good range of hymns and songs as well as prayers, including the sung school prayer. Staff make sure that all acts of worship include a clear period for reflection and prayer. The Bishops Visitor makes visits to collective worship and particularly enjoys those where pupils participate.

Other visitors, including charity representatives, come to the school to lead collective worship. Pupils particularly enjoyed and spoke in detail of those led by Gener8 and other community groups. Older pupils have also had the opportunity to worship in the cathedral. This good practice ensures that collective worship and the Anglican tradition are foremost in the life and work of the school. The school now plans to make positive links with representatives from other Christian denominations in the local area to widen pupil's knowledge of the breadth of Christian churches in Britain.

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

The acting headteacher, continuing the high quality practice established by the headteacher, is a good, very effective leader of all who work in the school. Along with the highly effective chair of the governing body the leadership team has a very clear vision for its future development as a church school. All are focused in particular on maintaining the very clear Christian ethos of support to all pupils, to enable them to develop as positive citizens as well as fully supporting their academic success. Management skills are likewise of a high quality.

As a result the atmosphere is very positive with pupils, staff and volunteers confident and enjoying all that they are asked to do, being challenged in their work. The whole staff, teaching and support staff alike are a high-quality coherent team. They are aware of what the school stands for in the community, and are confident and comfortable about their part in developing the vision further.

The good-quality, supportive but challenging, governing body, led by the experienced chair acts as a valuable, critical friend to the school, giving the headteacher, the acting headteacher and staff high levels of support. All work together in a close partnership to monitor, evaluate and develop the school in line with identified needs from the School Evaluation Form (SEF). The school's Christian purpose is well thought out and communicated to parents in the brochure and reinforced in all communications.

The local vicar, after a period of illness, has found it difficult to pick up the threads of his previous involvement with the school and thus offer the pastoral and clerical support previously given. On occasions the staff have therefore had to look elsewhere for advice and guidance.

All who have contact with the school, including volunteers; church members; the Bishop's Visitor and the foundation governors as well as pupils and parents speak highly of the outstanding relationships between all the adults and the children. They all have confidence that any issues will be dealt with in a positive and sympathetic manner. The school leaders and teaching staff encourage confidence in parents in particular. Parents feel that all staff, but the headteacher and acting headteacher in particular, are approachable, especially concerning anything that affects the development of their children and their learning. The acting headteacher in return is especially appreciative of the support of the staff, the governors, parents and the local community while the headteacher is on maternity leave. She sees the school success as only possible because all adults involved fully support the school's Christian ethos and are committed to provide the best for all the children, regardless of their backgrounds, ethnicity or abilities. The school is able to offer pupils a very good understanding of Christian traditions in theory and in practice.