



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools

Fordham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Isleham Road
Fordham
Ely
Cambridgeshire
CB7 5NL

Diocese: Ely

Local authority: Cambridgeshire

Dates of inspection: 31 January 2007

Date of last inspection: April 2003

School's unique reference number: 110788

Headteacher: Mr Kevin Bullock

Inspector's name and number: Betty Barratt 203

School context

Fordham Church of England School is a “one form entry “ school and serves the village of Fordham and other villages nearby. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than in most schools. The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is also slightly lower than that found nationally and very few speak languages other than English in the home. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is below average for a school of this size and there are currently no pupils with a statement of special educational need. The school has a Basic Skills Award and an Investor in People Award. The school is situated close to the parish church

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Fordham as a Church of England school are outstanding

The very strong Christian ethos which permeates the school brings extremely positive values and attitudes to teaching and learning. Pupils thrive in a happy, relaxed and secure environment. They respond very well to the high expectations for their achievement, behaviour, and care and consideration of one another. Adults are excellent role models and deeply committed to promoting a strong, distinctive Christian vision for the school. Relationships with the local church and community are excellent.

Established strengths

- The deep commitment of the Headteacher, staff and governors to promoting the distinctive Christian character of the school
- The Christian principles which are lived out in practice by the whole school community
- The high quality acts of worship, including all pupils and staff, contribute greatly to pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- The exceptionally good relationships between pupils and adults, amongst pupils and between staff.

Focus for development

- Ensure that all pupils are developing good knowledge and understanding of the Anglican faith and practice by establishing strategies for assessing their progress.
- Provide more evidence of the school’s status as a Church School in school’s entrance foyer

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

The school's exceptionally strong Christian ethos and values result in all pupils being very well supported and helped to flourish personally as individuals. They are encouraged to have confidence in their ability to succeed through doing their best, and not to be afraid of sometimes not succeeding. Their efforts are rewarded formally and informally through presentations, on-going praise and positive feedback. Parents say their children succeed because they want to do well, and not because they are under pressure to do so. Pupils feel safe, happy and secure in a warm, welcoming and orderly environment. The excellent relationships between pupils and teachers, amongst pupils and between adults are key to pupils' outstanding achievement. Pupils value the many opportunities they have to take responsibility for example, as ECO Warriors, monitors, and office receptionists. They welcome being able to contribute their ideas about school life through the School Council, and to express their views outside of the school. Pupils recently sent an e-mail to the BBC complaining about swearing on television programmes, and shared their thoughts about the world on BBC Radio Suffolk. Pupils are proud of their school, and feel fully involved in its many activities which they enjoy greatly. Their behaviour is excellent. They are very caring, considerate and helpful to one another. There is no hierarchy of seniority between the Year groups. Parents appreciate the way their children grow in confidence and ability to relate well to adults and each other. The richness of pupils' learning fulfils the school's aim to encourage an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and Christian values, and provides outstanding support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' spiritual development is further supported by the vibrant and attractive, displays throughout the school which include a cross in the assembly hall, pictures from biblical stories and prayers written by pupils. Its status as Church of England School would be emphasised by more evidence of this in the school's entrance foyer.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective Worship is regarded as being very important, and central to the life of the school. It has a significant impact on all members of the school community. All pupils and adults participate fully, and assemblies and church services are often attended by parents and governors. Major Christian festivals and occasions such as Harvest Festivals are celebrated in church. Pupils enjoy collective worship singing lustily with great enjoyment, listening attentively to stories, and joining in prayer. Prayer forms an important part of school life. Prayers, including the school prayer, are displayed and pupils often read and write their own prayers. They enthuse about Biblical stories especially those told by the Vicar who, along with other visiting clergy, plays a key role in supporting the school's worship in school assemblies and church. Pupils relish taking part in collective worship acting as assembly monitors, and often playing a key role alongside the Vicar and their teachers. Both assemblies and church services encourage pupils to reflect and engage with Christian values and prayer in their own lives. Staff feel that adults and pupils derive much inspiration and spiritual growth through bonding in collective worship. Church services make an important contribution to developing pupils' understanding of the Anglican faith and practice. Pupils are introduced to aspects of liturgy; learn to understand patterns of worship and how to behave in church. Older pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of church practice. For example, they readily named the church seasons, and explained that these are reflected in the colour of vestments worn by priests. However, the extent of their knowledge and understanding is not formally assessed. Collective worship is very carefully planned and well resourced. Much importance is given to reviewing and evaluating its effectiveness. Daily evaluation by Year 6 pupils is used by the headteacher to inform future planning.

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

The head teacher's deep Christian faith and dedication to promoting the school's Christian character, permeates the whole school. The school's Christian purpose is clearly expressed in its aims and values, and staff appointments are guided by the need to ensure that these are upheld by those new to the school. Staff feel highly valued and are deeply committed to the achievement of the head teacher's vision for the school as a church school. They regard his leadership and commitment highly, and appreciate being consulted regularly about putting the school's vision into practice. There is great respect among adults and learners, all are valued equally whatever their role or year group. Staff are excellent role models in the way their values are reflected in their daily lives. The school's admission policy is fully inclusive, and the Christian message made available to all families. The foundation governors have a clear view of their role, and are deeply committed to promoting the school's distinctive Christian character and vision. They work closely with the school as critical friends, questioning and identifying areas to be further developed. They share in the stringent monitoring through the Vision to Concrete procedures which constantly evaluate the realisation of the school's vision, and lead to clearly focused development planning. Current targets for development include enabling pupils to understand the Lords Prayer more fully, and to provide guidance for visitors taking part in assemblies. Relationships with the local community are excellent. The links with the local church are very strong. In addition to the key role he plays in collective worship in church and school, the Vicar is a member of the school governing body and a frequent visitor to the school. He is very well known and liked by pupils who are actively involved in church events. For example, they open the church Christmas Bazaar by carol singing and put on displays for special occasions in church such as flower festivals. The school works closely with other denominations, the pastor of the local Congregational church is a regular visitor and leads assemblies, and there are strong links with the wider community. These include supporting the elderly, local charities and working with the Greenlight Trust in planting and maintaining sapling trees. Regular questionnaires seek the views of parents and members of the wider community about how well the school is progressing overall.