

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



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*of*  
**ELY**



Name and address of school – Swaffham Prior CEVC Primary School,  
Station Road,  
Swaffham Prior,  
Cambridgeshire.  
CB25 0LG

Type of school - Primary

Status – Voluntary Controlled

Diocese – Ely

LEA - Cambridgeshire

Dates of inspection – 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> July 2007

Date of last inspection – 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> June 2003

School's Unique reference number - 110794

Name of Headteacher – Mrs. Emma Vincent

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

### **School context**

This small primary school is in the village of Swaffham Prior, near Cambridge. Most of the 106 pupils come from the village, though many come from out of the catchment area through parental choice. The majority of pupils are from white, British backgrounds with the rest drawn from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, including the Traveller Community. There are no pupils at an early stage of learning English. The school has close links with St. Mary's Church. Pupils and their parents are welcomed to the monthly family worship service at the church and the school celebrates major Christian festivals in church.

### **Summary Judgement**

Swaffham Prior is a good Church of England school where relationships are outstanding and where the school is particularly effective in meeting the needs of all learners through its distinctive Christian character.

### **Established strengths**

The leadership of the Headteacher is very effective. She gives a clear, firm direction to the school. The school has an atmosphere that is very positive and supportive, showing a very good, clear Christian vision of concern and care for all. The school has effective, high-quality evaluation procedures in place to identify and target improvements. 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:

- Set up Inset training on leading collective worship
- Develop pupils' greater participation in acts of collective worship and widening the variety of worship styles and materials
- Establish a more formal pupil evaluation system of collective worship

to which should be added:

- Seek out and involve members from different Christian denominations in acts of collective worship
- Increase the opportunities for pupils to meet those of different cultures, faiths and languages that make up contemporary Britain.

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

The school's mission statement:

*"Serving our community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice"*

appears prominently in the School Prospectus and in the entrance to the school, and encapsulates the ethos of, and is visible in, all the work of the school.

Spiritual, moral and social provision is outstanding and, along with the excellent provision for pupil's personal development and well-being, is a significant strength of the school. This is underpinned by exemplary relationships between pupils and all adults. Without exception, pupils demonstrate the virtues of self-respect, respect of and care for others, the ability to take responsibility for themselves, being unselfish and treating all with kindness and toleration. Those with special educational needs are managed with care by support staff so as not to interrupt the work of others, while the Playground Buddies give very good support to the lonely. The very high quality behaviour policy ensures all know what behaviour is acceptable and the consequences of not behaving well. Parents are very appreciative of the support their children receive. They also see relationships within the school community as exemplary. Pupils and their parents feel very happy to discuss any problems and good systems are in place to guide pupils' progress.

Pupils see the school as very supportive of their personal development as well as of their academic progress. Their successes are celebrated and rewarded very effectively in celebration assemblies. Pupils who are elected as members of the School Council enjoy their responsibilities and take their role seriously. They present ideas to the Head, including the purchase of new equipment and fundraising for charity. Members of the School Council also had time with the candidates for the Deputy Head position, sharing their opinions before the appointment was made. 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 at the time of the inspection classrooms also had displays from the faith under study in Religious Education. Pupils' recordings of visits are carefully mounted, showing the value teachers put on pupils work. The outside environment of the school is outstanding. From the wildlife

ecology area to the quiet grassed area and reception class play area, great care has been taken to provide an environment that encourages spiritual reflection.

### ***The impact of collective worship on the school community is good***

Collective worship makes a positive impact on the work of the school. Worship is consistently and recognisably Christian, following the school's Anglican tradition. Themes for each week are drawn from the church calendar with input from staff, parents, the family service group from the local church and the incumbent. Resources are drawn from Diocesan guidance and added into a good, clear policy based on the school's aims. This high quality policy has been established since the previous inspection. Acts of worship are consistently well planned, imaginative and inspiring. Candles, Crosses and Bibles, are used well to help pupils focus. Music especially helps establish a spiritual atmosphere. Each act of collective worship has a good, clear pattern including hymns and prayers. Pupils know a good range of hymns and songs as well as prayers, including the Lord's Prayer and the Grace. The Headteacher makes sure that all acts of worship include a clear period for reflection and prayer. Teachers use the theme for the week well in work in class discussions and for personal, social and health education work. There are good levels of participation by pupils in such worship, especially in achievement assemblies, Church drama group assemblies and those led by the local vicar, one of the Foundation Governors, who is made very welcome by staff and pupils alike. Pupils sing tunefully, listen attentively, enjoy humour and are very willing to answer questions as well as join together in prayers. The Bishops Visitor makes visits to Collective Worship, as do members of the governing body.

Other visitors, including charity representatives, visit the school to lead collective worship. The school also makes visits to the local church, with pupils forming the Family Worship Drama group. This good practice ensures that collective worship and the Anglican tradition are foremost in the life and work of the school. The members of the school council especially commented upon their links with the church. As one said:

"(my brother said) it's special when leavers get a Bible from the vicar at our leavers service, ..it makes you feel special to the school and the church community."

The school now needs to involve Christians from across the Anglican family as well as from the different denominations in the local area in its collective worship, in order to widen pupils' knowledge of the breadth of Christian churches in Britain.

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

The Headteacher is a very effective leader of the school staff team. Although appointed recently, she had time as Deputy Headteacher and then Acting Headteacher to develop her very clear vision for the school's development, building upon the work of the previous Head. Her management skills are likewise of a very high quality. As a result there is a very happy atmosphere with pupils and staff confident and challenged in their work. The staff, both teaching and support, are a good, coherent team as the Headteacher has effectively communicated her vision of the school to staff so that they are all completely confident and comfortable about their part in developing this vision further.

The knowledgeable, supportive and challenging governing body, led by an experienced chair, acts as a good, critical friend to the school, giving the Headteacher good levels of support. All work together in a close partnership to monitor, evaluate and develop the school in line with needs identified in the School Evaluation Form (SEF). The school's Christian purpose is well thought out and communicated to parents in the prospectus and reinforced in all activities.

All who have contact with the school, including the local vicar, the governors, the foundation governors, the members of the Friends association as well as pupils and their parents speak highly of the very positive relationships between adults and children. They all have confidence that any issues will be dealt with positively and sympathetically. The personal management style of the Headteacher encourages confidence in parents in particular. They feel that she is

approachable and knows their children very well.

The Headteacher is especially appreciative of the support of the staff, the governors, parents and the local community. She sees the school success as only possible because all adults involved fully support the Christian ethos. The school is able to offer pupils a very good understanding of Christian traditions in theory and in practice.