



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Castle Camps Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Lane
Castle Camps
Cambridgeshire
CB21 4TH

Diocese: Ely

Local authority: Cambridgeshire

Dates of inspection: 28 April 2009

Date of last inspection: 22/ 25 May 2006

School's unique reference number: 110784

Headteacher: Mr Kevin Sheenan

Inspector's name and number: Betty Barratt 203

School context

Castle Camps Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School serves Castle Camps, Haverhill and neighbouring villages. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average, and the percentage with learning difficulties is similar to other primary schools. The number of children joining the school other than at the usual time is much higher than average. The school is about 20 minutes walk from the parish church.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Castle Camps as a Church of England school are good

The school's strong Christian ethos inspires very good relationships, positive values and attitudes to teaching and learning. Learners thrive in a happy, relaxed and secure environment. They respond very well to the high expectations for their achievement and behaviour, and their care for one another. The staff are excellent role models and dedicated to promoting the distinctiveness of the school as a Church of England school.

Established strengths

- The commitment of the headteacher, staff and foundation governors to promoting the distinctive Christian character of the school.
- Learners are happy, confident and relish opportunities to take responsibility.
- Learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported by the school's ethos, collective worship and religious education.

Focus for development

- Promote closer links with church worship to support pupils' understanding of Anglican practice
- Ensure that staff, governors, parents and pupils are involved in monitoring and evaluating the achievement of the school's Christian vision.
- Provide a clear Christian focus at all gatherings for collective worship

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

Learners thrive in the strong Christian ethos which permeates the school. They enjoy coming to school, and learn confidently in a warm, secure and welcoming environment. All are equally valued. The strong focus on care and respect for one another, and excellent relationships and behaviour result in happy and confident young people who relish responsibility. They are especially proud of being members of the school council speaking enthusiastically about recommending ways of improving the school buildings and grounds, and their fund raising for Red Nose Day and cancer research. Learners enthuse about the many out of lesson activities such as the sports and music clubs including the Rainbow Ukulele Orchestra. Their confidence and self-esteem are boosted by the celebration of their achievements. Learners look forward to the weekly Golden Book Assembly and other rewards such as house points which reinforce the value placed on their efforts. They are very well supported in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by teaching in religious education, opportunities to reflect during worship, and the school environment. Vibrant display, worship corners and the imaginative design of the school grounds to provide quiet areas, strongly promote thought and reflection. Children marvel at the opportunity to watch seeds develop into plants in the vegetable plots, and are very proud that their produce is eaten at the celebration of the harvest. Christian symbols such as crosses, candles and the Bible corner in the school entrance, are clear reminders of the school's Christian character and Church of England status.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship has an important impact on the life of the school. The headteacher takes overall responsibility for ensuring that worship is well-planned and reviewed regularly. It has been a key area of development over the last three years and contributes well to learners' understanding of Anglican faith. Worship themes reflect Christian values, festivals and other events in the Christian calendar. Christmas, Easter and leavers' services, led by the vicar, are held in the two neighbouring parish churches, and are well attended by parents, families and governors. Learners enjoy worship. They responded extremely well to the worship during the inspection, eagerly answering questions about teaching in the Bible, singing joyfully and joining reverently in prayer. All teachers lead whole school or class worship, and value the opportunities to reflect. While worship is Christian in character, not all occasions have a clear Christian visual focus such as a worship table, cross and candle. Prayer is important in the life of the school and makes a powerful contribution to learners' spiritual development. Learners write their own prayers and say them during worship. Grace is said before the midday meal, and prayers, reinforcing worship themes, are sung at the end of the day. Learners' understanding of Anglican practices is hindered by the difficulty in using the parish churches for worship caused by the distances between them and the school. The school and vicar are seeking ways of overcoming this problem. Ideas include holding church services such as the weekday Eucharist in school.

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

The headteacher, staff, and foundation governors are deeply committed to the achievement of the school's distinctive Christian character, and are well supported by parents and the whole governing body. The headteacher's determined drive to promote a distinctive Christian vision for the school, reinforces its status as a church school in the local community. Staff feel highly valued and are excellent role models. Parents are fully informed of the school's vision, and the school prospectus and policies reaffirm its Christian values and Church of England identity. The vicar and foundation governors visit the school regularly, and monitor the achievement of its Christian vision suggesting areas for improvement such as closer links between school and church worship. The frequent presence of church members in school, and the display of children's work in the churches are physical reminders of the links with the church. There are good links with the diocese and local community. Learners visit Ely cathedral and staff appreciate diocesan training, including the recent guidance on collective worship. Closer links with the church and diocese are being developed through initiatives such as Mission Action Planning and the 'Ely 900' celebrations. The school's involvement in local events such as the annual fun day is reciprocated by members of the community

helping with tidying the school grounds and other small tasks at the termly 'odd jobs' morning. The school's self-evaluation of its progress in achieving its Christian vision is accurate, but does not systematically involve staff, foundation governors, parents and learners.

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