



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Coton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Whitwell Way
Coton
Cambridgeshire
CB3 7PW

Diocese: Ely

Local authority: Cambridgeshire
Date of inspection: 26 November 2008
Date of last inspection: October 2005
School's unique reference number: 110786
Headteachers: Jenny Maguire and Margaret Guest
Inspector's name and number: Simon Windmill 182

School context

The school serves the villages of Coton and Madingley, and is led by two headteachers working together in partnership. It has links with its parish church. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is about average, and the number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is low. The school has attained the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Active Mark and Healthy Schools status.

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

The school's Christian values are apparent in the relationships between pupils, staff and governors. As a result, pupils' personal development is excellent, pupils feel valued and safe, and have great self-confidence. Following the recommendations of the previous inspection, the school has posted its Ethos and Mission statements in the school entrance, created excellent displays reflecting the school's Christian foundation, and enhanced opportunities for prayer in worship and elsewhere. Staff and governors make a highly effective management team.

Established strengths

- Christian values underpin all aspects of the life of the school
- The high level of care given to pupils which greatly supports their all-round development
- The leadership and management of the headteacher and governors
- The excellent behaviour of pupils

Focus for development

- Complete and implement the policy for Community Cohesion
- Give pupils even more opportunities to use their own prayers in collective worship
- Explore the possibility of creating quiet areas for reflection within the school building

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

The headteachers, staff and governors see the school's Christian ethos as fundamental to school life. Care and support for pupils and staff are outstanding, reflecting the school's Christian values. In the school's warm, welcoming and inclusive atmosphere, pupils feel valued as individuals. They get on exceptionally well with each other and with the staff, who provide good role models. These excellent relationships help pupils to develop self-confidence and independence. Pupils like coming to school, and greatly enjoy their lessons.

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They are involved in setting the rules, and therefore respect them, and understand the consequences if they are broken. Older pupils say that they intervene if they see signs of potential misbehaviour, so lapses in behaviour are minor, very rare and always dealt with quickly, fairly and effectively. One pupil said, 'Everyone's really friendly, including the teachers, and no one's a bully'.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and multicultural development is outstanding, multicultural understanding being exceptionally strong. A link with a London school contributes greatly to this. The headteachers, staff and governors see this as a vital part of pupils' learning. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong. One said, 'Assembly helps me to know what I should and shouldn't do'.

The school's visual environment makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development through lively and stimulating displays, many of which reflect the school's Christian foundation, for example in displays illustrating Bible stories.

Pupils' awareness and concern for the needs of others is encouraged and they willingly contribute to many good causes, such as Children in Need and Operation Christmas Child. Pupils treat each other with exceptional care and respect. The school council is an effective way of giving pupils a say in how the school is run, which they value highly.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The headteachers and staff see collective worship as the foundation of school life, and worship is securely based on the Christian gospel. It always includes singing, teaching and time for prayer and reflection. A picture of praying hands, a candle or other visual focus is used in worship.

Pupils are exceptionally enthusiastic about worship, especially when they have a part to play. They readily put their written prayers into the prayer net which hangs in the hall. They already have plenty of opportunities to contribute to collective worship, but they would welcome even more involvement, particularly in saying their own prayers.

Pupils have a highly developed understanding of the range of styles and purposes of prayer, including saying thank you, asking for help, healing or forgiveness, and saying sorry. They like to use the quiet areas for prayer or reflection. Prayer is also said in classrooms before lunch or at the end of the day.

Worship is very well planned around themes which include all the main Church festivals. Many of these are celebrated in the church, which is also used regularly as a resource for the RE curriculum, for example by enacting a Christening or a wedding. Pupils particularly enjoy these events. Pupil representatives take part in other church services such as Education Sunday and the Patronal festival.

The local clergy of Anglican and other denominations make a strong contribution by leading worship once a week, and the GenR8 Christian group also leads worship. The incumbent sometimes uses Godly Play in school, and also offers Pastoral support. Records of collective worship are kept, and informal feedback from pupils, staff governors is sought so that the impact of worship on pupils can be monitored and evaluated by the foundation governors.

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

The headteachers give outstanding leadership to the school, and are very well supported by the staff and governors. As a team they successfully promote a distinctive and active Christian vision for the school, with Christian values supporting its life and work. This is underpinned by the school's vision statement and collective worship policy.

Governors have a strong and active commitment to enhancing provision for pupils, and monitor the work of the school very effectively. They also commit to ensuring that equality and inclusiveness is maintained. Staff say they feel highly valued and supported in their work. They enjoy working as a very effective team, and look after each other's well-being.

The partnership between school, church and the wider community is outstanding, and highly valued by all. Responses to questionnaires show that parents are highly satisfied with the school, particularly the atmosphere which is generated through the school's caring relationships - the phrase 'family atmosphere' was often heard during the inspection. One parent said, "All schools should be run like this one – it's fantastic!"

Members of the wider community hold the school in high regard. Pupils greatly enjoy getting involved in community events, such as participating in church services, performing at the village fete, singing for the Over 60s club, and in many other ways. The staff and governors are writing a policy for encouraging community cohesion.

The school's self-evaluation provides a sound basis for future developments.