



Farcet Church of England (VC) Primary School
St Mary's Street
Farcet
Peterborough PE7 3AR

Diocese: Ely

Local authority: Cambridgeshire

Date of inspection: 2nd April 2009

Date of last inspection: 16th & 17th January 2006

School's unique reference number: 110811

Headteacher: Mrs Julie Branch

Inspector's name and number: Mr Stephen Cutts 495

School context

This smaller than average school serves Farcet village and the surrounding area. There are 143 on role in 5 mixed-age classes. Most pupils are White British in origin. High numbers of pupils have behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. The school has the Basic Skills Award, ECO Silver Award, Sportsmark and Health Promoting School accreditation, reflecting its policy of all-round education and care for the individual child. The Church is in an interregnum.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Farcet as a Church of England school are Good.

Farcet Primary School is overtly a Church School providing a stimulating and happy learning environment. The head teacher is justly proud of team work and relationships are supportive, loving and strong. Displays and collective worship are predominantly Christian, though the school teaches other faiths very well and children talk authoritatively about different cultures and beliefs. Children are articulate about their own faith and enjoy school. There is a thriving parents' group that raises funds and organises social events.

Established strengths

- Team work and commitment. . Everyone is valued and their views are respected.
- Special events, such as the "Easter Stations" seen on the day of inspection, are well-planned, thoughtful and inspiring.
- The friendly family atmosphere of the school makes everyone feel welcome and comfortable.
- The caring and sharing ethos of the school including good support of charities.

Focus for development

- More rigorous monitoring of Collective Worship, involving governors and seeking the views of all stakeholders.
- A more-active role for children in Collective Worship, to give them ownership and further enjoyment.
- Further links with the local church across the whole curriculum, making sure that the church openly displays its close connections with the school.

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

Farcet School is welcoming, and all staff are committed to the Christian ethos that permeates all areas. This is a small school with a strong family atmosphere, so members of staff know all children well and are able to meet their individual needs. Behaviour is good and everyone is made to feel special. Children clearly understand and value the special qualities of a church school. Teamwork is excellent. Pupils help, care and support each other. There is a variety of reward and praise schemes established and children feel that their ideas and views are respected. Care of the individual child is very good and this is reflected in good progress, results and happy faces.

There is a good range of activities and opportunities on offer, covering different areas of the curriculum. Some of these help to forge good links with the local community, such as singing for the elderly and involvement in the annual church fete. The children support numerous charities, locally and worldwide, throughout the year, and have strong links with a school in the Philippines. Much of this work arises from suggestions made by the School Council. Visitors can be in no doubt that they have entered a place of Christian learning. Signs, school notepaper and badge all clearly state that Farcet is a Church of England School. There are crosses in all classrooms as well as in the entrance hall, and superb displays of children's pictures, writing and prayers reflect work done in Religious Education. At the time of the inspection there were excellent Easter displays of work done at home and in school. The school's prospectus, aims and motto clearly show that Christianity underpins all aspects of school life.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is Good

When children gather as a whole school, they enter quietly to music and are attentive. Hymns and the Lord's Prayer are beautifully sung. Children said that they enjoy the peace of everyday Collective Worship but they found it difficult to recall recent themes. They would like to be more involved on a regular basis, reading the story and writing the prayers. The older ones would like the chance to plan and lead their own class assemblies. Pupils thought Collective Worship was important because it gave them chance to praise and talk to God, though some saw it primarily as a chance to "show work they were proud of". However, a few pupils could give examples of how worship had made them act differently and one child had recently been Christened as a result of work done in school.. A programme of themes reflects the church year. Special occasions are celebrated in Church, usually about once a term. Local ministers and all staff take turns in leading the worship and believe that there should be an "element of fun" in following Jesus. Informal evaluation and monitoring of Collective Worship takes place occasionally but does not involve governors.

On the day of inspection, a specially-extended act of worship based on the Stations of the Cross was outstanding, and took children to different locations around the school where thought-provoking displays helped pupils to focus on aspects of the Easter Story. Each "station" was dramatic and effective, including reflection, story, prayer and simple activity led by teachers and support staff. Children were calm and reverent and responded well. In some cases, their answers showed a deep spiritual understanding. They told me that they would remember this day for a long time.

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

The headteacher is a proactive leader who clearly values the children, staff and governors as well as links with the local church. Staff well-being is considered important. In turn the headteacher enjoys good support from the staff and Bishop's Visitor. Their aim is to "provide equal opportunities in a Christian environment", and this is clearly achieved. These aims are prominent in all documentation. Links with the local church continue to develop even during the interregnum. Collective Worship and Religious Education feature prominently in the school booklet. This booklet is a positive strength, and provides an excellent introduction for new parents, sharing the Christian values of the school.

Views are sought in a variety of ways, largely through a scheme called Farcet Families and the school council, but all stakeholders are not currently involved in this process. Achievement is celebrated well and the school holds a variety of national awards. There is good involvement of governors though not in their role of monitoring. Whilst there is evidence of the church connection in school, this is not fully reciprocated in the church.

The Christian direction of the school is well thought-out by the Head, but this vision is not clearly articulated by all staff and governors. Good relationships exist between school, home and the community. The church background of the school influences appointments, interviews and induction procedures. Church matters are discussed regularly at Governors' meetings, and all the related policies are in place and reviewed appropriately. The school's self-evaluation is secure.

SIAS report April 2009 Farcet Church of England Primary (VC) School, St Mary's Street, Farcet, Peterborough. PE7 3AR