

Colne Engaine Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Green Farm Rd
Colne Engaine
Colchester
CO6 2 HA

Diocese: Chelmsford

Local authority: Essex
Dates of inspection: 24th September 2012
Date of last inspection: 11th December 2007
School's unique reference number: 115135
Headteacher: Mrs Julie Winstanley
Inspector's name and number: Rosemary Privett 321

School context

The school is a smaller than average rural primary school, with four mixed age classes. The proportion of pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs is above average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. There has been a change of headteacher since the last inspection.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Colne Engaine as a Church of England school are good

The school is a happy, caring and inclusive community. Distinctiveness and effectiveness are characterised by a nurturing environment which results in confident and happy pupils who enjoy coming to school and feel highly valued as individuals. Explicit Christian values are embedded and underpin all aspects school life. They are particularly evident in worship and also in the care guidance and support offered to all pupils.

Established strengths

- The core Christian values which strongly underpin all aspects of school life and have a very positive impact on attitudes and behaviour within the school.
- The strong emphasis on the care and emotional well being of pupils, which enables them to flourish both socially and academically.
- The strong and effective links between the school, the church and the wider community.

Focus for development

- Extend monitoring of Religious Education [RE] to include a more structured approach to monitoring the quality of pupils' recorded work.
- Develop opportunities for pupils to both plan and lead significant aspects of collective worship

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

The school's vision is encapsulated in the ERICERS (Empathy Respect, Integrity, Compassion Equality and Responsibility), its core Christian values. These values underpin all aspects of school life. They are particularly evident in the way they are made explicit, in relationships at all levels and in the outstanding pastoral care of all pupils. This support and guidance is seen by parents as a strength of the school. It is also greatly appreciated by pupils who say that staff treat them fairly and are always there to help them sort out problems. This excellent provision for the promotion of the self-confidence and the emotional well-being, results in a highly inclusive community where pupils are enabled to shine socially and academically. Older pupils recognize how the core values are lived out in the roles and responsibilities they have as buddies and playground mentors. Pupils enjoy coming to school. This is seen in the positive way they talk about school life. 'Our school isn't just good it's great!' 'They teach us well and work us hard, but most of all it's fun!' The school's lively visual environment effectively supports its teaching of values and fosters the spiritual development of pupils. Through the 'Wonder Wall', pupils display a sense of curiosity for the world around them and offer their own suggestions and solutions to life's big questions.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Well planned and creative acts of worship have a place of major importance in the life of the school, reflecting its Christian foundation. Its importance is demonstrated by the fact that staff, clergy and other visitors attend and lead worship regularly. The celebration of major festivals such as Easter and Christmas also take place in the local church. Pupils' attitudes to worship are very good. Themes are carefully linked to the school's Christian values and the cycle of the church year. Through these well planned acts of worship pupils have developed a good understanding of its purpose which they are able to articulate. One child said, 'It's not just a time to get together and talk about things, it's a time to show God respect and pray.' A 'Wonder Wall', worship board and appropriately placed Christian symbols are prominent features in the hall. This strong visual environment is used effectively to develop the pupils' sense of wonder as well as their understanding of aspects of the Anglican tradition. There are effective systems in place to monitor the impact of worship. Following a recent survey of pupil views, weekly 'Active Assemblies' were introduced which enable pupils to worship in a variety of ways, giving time for both active participation and times of quiet reflection. Currently there are occasions when pupils take a leadership role, such as when they share their own prayers or offer reflections on the worship theme. These opportunities need to be extended, however, to enable them to both plan and lead on a more regular basis.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Overall, the quality of religious education is good because standards in RE are in line with other core subjects and the subject is well led by the co-ordinator. Pupils enjoy RE and their attitudes to the subject are good. In Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 the range of learning approaches used ensure that the younger pupils learn through quiet times of reflection as well as more active play and practical activities. Where teaching in Key Stage 2 is at its best, teachers' subject knowledge is good, creative approaches engage pupils of all abilities and careful planning results in good learning. In these lessons pupils are able to reflect and share ideas. They can also make links between what they are learning and their everyday lives. Through planned visits to a variety of places of worship, pupils in both key stages are learning to value religious diversity and value the beliefs of others. As a result of careful monitoring by the co-ordinator, areas for development in RE are identified and professional development opportunities are provided. As a result of this monitoring, assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection and learning tasks are now better matched to the needs of individual pupils. The school also has an effective and manageable system for tracking progress across the key stages. These procedures need to be extended, however, to ensure that recorded work at Key Stage 2 always reflects the good quality of teaching and planning seen in lessons.

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

The headteacher has a strong personal vision for the school which is shared and articulated by staff and governors and appropriately reflects its Christian foundation. Her sharply focused approach to the development of the school's core Christian values, the ERICERS, has resulted in an approach which is now firmly embedded and has a very positive impact on all aspects of school life. All stakeholders support these values because they were fully involved in their development. Teamwork is strong, effective and cohesive and enables all members to feel valued and supported. Relationships are based on mutual trust and respect. Regular visits to schools by foundation governors mean that they know the school well and are aware of its strengths and areas for improvement. They offer the headteacher effective challenge and support in developing the school's Christian character. One example of this support is the way in which, following the creation of the school's core values, the RE governor produced a useful reference document linking them to bible stories. This is now used by the school as a source of reference and inspiration. Through this strong partnership and the work of the curriculum, learning and well-being committee, issues relating to the school's Christian distinctiveness feed effectively into the school improvement plan. This ensures that there are realistic plans in place for the school's future development. There are strong and mutually supportive links between the school, the church and the wider community which benefit all. Parish council members attend school council meetings and report back to council meetings. As a result, pupils have been involved in measures to improve aspects of village life. These links enable the vision of the school to be shared with the wider community.

