

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Little Hallingbury Church of England (VA) Primary School

Wright's Green Lane

Little Hallingbury

Bishop's Stortford

Essex

CM22 7RE

Diocese: Chelmsford

Local authority: Essex

Dates of inspection: 27th March 2012

Date of last inspection: 22nd March 2007

School's unique reference number: 115182

Headteacher: Mrs Barbara Coates

Inspector's name and number: Andrew Jones 723

School context

Little Hallingbury Church of England (VA) Primary School is a highly regarded village school attended by children predominantly living in the villages of Little and Great Hallingbury. Almost all of the 147 children on roll are of white British heritage. The school has an attractive and diverse site that is well-used by both the school and the local community.

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

The high profile given to well-established Christian values is integral to the school's distinctiveness. These values are reflected in the very positive attitudes and behaviour of the children and modelled by the adults working in the school. This results in a climate that is extremely caring and inclusive, where children are nurtured and enabled to be successful in their learning and personal development.

Established strengths

- The impact of Christian values on the quality of relationships and the positive attitudes of all members of the school community
- The interaction and interdependence between school, church and local community
- Spiritual, moral, cultural and social development, (SMSC) evident in both collective worship and religious education
- The excellent leadership provided by the Headteacher

Focus for development

- To produce a system to evaluate collective worship involving children and governors

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

The school's Christian values are very effectively woven throughout all aspects of the daily life of the school and strongly influence the excellent relationships that exist between all members of the school community. A child said, "Our values give us something to follow, something to believe in," and a parent commented, "I am pleased with the Christian community experience the children have here." Although the identified Christian values are broad in range, the children know what they all are and are able to explain how they make a difference in the school. Parents are familiar with the values of the school and report that their children talk about them at home. Christian values consistently underpin SMSC development. For example, children spoke coherently about the importance of Fairtrade and concerns about injustice and unfairness were considered during both a Y5/6 RE lesson and collective worship. Children are enthusiastic about their school and appreciate its caring and supportive ethos. For example the school council and the play leader scheme are very successful in enabling the children to take responsibility. Displays of children's work, visual reminders about its Christian values and a range of artefacts around the school clearly reflect its Christian character and make a significant contribution to the children's spiritual development. For example, in the entrance foyer, symbols and artefacts from world religions are displayed, with a strong emphasis on Christianity. Along one corridor an interactive Easter display includes a range of open-ended questions to engage and challenge the children.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Children thoroughly enjoy collective worship during which they are fully engaged. They listen very well, answer questions thoughtfully and appreciate the opportunities they have for leading prayers. Singing is very enthusiastic. Collective worship is inclusive, central to all aspects of the daily life of the school and very positively influences attitudes, behaviour and the school's sense of community. A table with a Bible and a candle sited in the school hall provides an important focus for worship. The school council members value the responsibility given them to regularly organise and lead acts of worship. Prayer is a very important feature of school life at times other than only during collective worship. Children appreciate the opportunity this provides for them to consider the needs of others and to be thankful. Weekly acts of worship led either by the vicar or youth worker are held in the parish church. These acts of worship contribute to the excellent experience the children have of a range of Anglican traditions and practice. For example, during Easter week, worship sensitively centred upon the stations of the cross. Collective worship is very well-planned, taking particular account of the church calendar, a rolling programme of themes and the Christian values of the school. Currently there is not a system in place to formally evaluate collective worship involving children and governors.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Children in KS1 and KS2 make excellent progress in religious education (RE). Evidence gathered through regular and thorough assessment confirms that standards are in line with and often above the high standards attained by the children in other core subjects. Schemes of work are effectively drawn from three main sources including the Chelmsford diocesan syllabus. The new RE leader, well-supported by senior leaders, analyses data, observes lessons and scrutinises children's work in order to ensure that learning is effective and progressive. Parents confirm that they are kept very well informed both of the work their children are undertaking each term in RE and of the progress their children make. Children clearly enjoy RE. Lessons are well-planned and employ a range of very engaging teaching strategies including lively IT resources, drama, music and discussion. In a highly effective Y1 lesson, the children saw a clip about chicks hatching, heard the Easter story told inter-actively and were helped to appreciate the wonder of new life through sensitive, differentiated, open-ended questions. In a Y5/6 lesson, opportunities to reflect, for example, on the injustice Jesus faced compared to current issues of injustice and unfairness, contributed well to SMSC development. Through very effective teaching in RE, children also develop a deep respect and regard for others and are keenly aware of the value of individual differences thus promoting community cohesion. For example, a child said, "In RE lessons we are taught how to relate to people who are different."

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

The school is extremely well-led and managed by the Headteacher and senior members of staff providing excellent strategic leadership with a sharp focus on achieving high standards within the context of a church school. Governors and members of staff are highly committed to the continuing development of the Christian distinctiveness of the school. This commitment is evident in the high profile given to Christian values, collective worship and strong partnerships with the church and local community. The links with a Gambian school and Fairtrade enterprises very effectively contribute to the development of SMSC. Links between the school, the parish church and the local community are very strong. A parent commented, "The school is an extension of our community. There is a sense of continuity for the children where school is just a part." For example, a joint enterprise provided a hall established on the school site for use by the local scout groups and the school and resources are readily shared between them. Children and parents understand what it means to be part of a church school and readily articulate how the Christian values of the school underpin its attitudes and practice. A child said, "If we had no Christian values, we would not be so nice to one another." Governors and members of staff agreed the vision, principles and Christian values of the school together and consistent development is ensured through effective and systematic self evaluation leading to targeted improvement planning. The headteacher and governors determine continuing Christian distinctiveness by ensuring that prospective new members of staff are prepared to be committed to the underpinning vision, principles and Christian values of the school. This is reinforced through interview and subsequent processes of induction.