

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Feering Church of England VC Primary School
Coggeshall Road,
Feering,
Essex
CO5 9QB

Diocese: Chelmsford

Local authority: Essex

Dates of inspection: Monday 19th September 2011

Date of last inspection: Friday 21st June 2008

School's unique reference number: 115106

Headteacher: Jane Pomeroy

Inspector's name and number: Rosemary Privett, 321 Sign off inspection: Stephen Southgate

School context

Feering Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average primary school and serves its immediate community. There are currently 157 on roll. The majority of the children are White British, a small number of the children speak English as an additional language. The Headteacher has been in post for nearly three years, the parish priest for eight years. The parish church is within walking distance of the school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Feering Church of England VC Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

Feering School is at an exciting stage in its development. All members of the school community are supportive of the school's distinctive Christian character and recognise that it has a significant impact upon the personal and spiritual development of the children in its care. The school is empowered in its mission by the strong links it has established with the local church and the wider community.

Established strengths

- The honest and supportive relationships established between all members of the extended school community that are based on Christian values.
- The personal commitment of the headteacher to nurture and develop the Christian character of the school.
- The receptive nature of the school community to embrace change that impacts positively upon the children's personal and spiritual development.
- The commitment of governors to support the school's distinctive Christian character through their involvement in the day to day life of the school.

Focus for development

- To explore ways in which the school's Christian values can be expressed more concisely, and made more explicit, in all school documentation.
- To review the format of the school's development plan establishing a clear framework for monitoring the development of the school's distinctive Christian character.
- To develop the current good practice used in class worship to enable the children to play a more active part in whole school worship.

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

The school's ethos of promoting a safe and happy learning environment, rooted in Christian values, is embedded and valued. Parents speak of the school's 'good reputation' and say that 'the school's fundamental principles are right' because they are based on 'kindness and high levels of care'. They recognise the commitment of the staff and refer to them as a 'caring team'. However, school documentation requires scrutiny because it refers to several different sets of aims and vision statements. There is a need for the school's Christian values to be expressed with greater clarity and consistency. The themes used as the structure for worship are working successfully, providing the school community with a unifying framework and common language to explore. Exploration of the current theme, 'compassion' is evident in central wall displays. Children are able to explain other Christian values they have considered and how the themes have impacted upon their thinking. They say how discussing these values, enables them to consider the importance of 'helping the lonely' and 'learning to

trust'. Children currently refer to these values as PSHE themes rather than Christian values. An impressive quilt, depicting stories from the Bible, designed by the children and worked by adult members of the school community is a very tangible example of how the school is using the visual environment to support its distinctive Christian character. The children are rightly proud of their charitable work. Fundraising for the local hospice and for those affected by the tsunami highlights the children's active engagement in supporting local and global needs. Cross-curricular planning promotes the children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. There is scope, however, for showing clearer links between the 7 Feering Skills and the school's Christian values. The teaching of RE supports the school's distinctive Christian character and provides some opportunities for spiritual reflection. The children say that their opinions are valued and acted upon. The carefully considered positioning and child friendly appearance of the STOP box (several times on purpose) reflects the school leadership's sensitive but active approach to promoting a harmonious and inclusive community.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is good because it is carefully planned around focused Christian values and is given high status. It is regarded as a key feature of school life and children's attitudes to worship are positive. The headteacher speaks enthusiastically about her vision for continuing the creative development of worship. Children arrive promptly and calmly ready to engage in worship, with the visual images prepared to focus their attention. These images now include tablecloths in liturgical colours. Children have a good understanding of their significance. The school has addressed the two development points highlighted in the last inspection. The central message of the act of worship is made clear and children are encouraged to respond to direct questions. There is however further potential for the children to be more actively involved in leading aspects of worship. This has already been highlighted by the children and acknowledged by senior staff. Good practice is evident in Upper Key Stage 2 where clear lines of organisation for the children's participation in class worship are well documented and resourced. The pupil perception survey, foundation governors and parents all highlight the significant impact that 'Family Friday' worship has on the spiritual growth of the school community. There is a strong partnership between church and school. The children refer to the parish church as 'our church'. The regular involvement of the parish priest and work undertaken in response to issues from the last inspection ensures that the children have a good understanding of many aspects of the Anglican tradition. Key Stage 2 children have an extensive and deep rooted knowledge of the symbolism and liturgy of major Christian festivals. Children speak confidently about the significance of lighted candles; one child spoke of 'Jesus as the light of the world'. The commitment of the local lay pastor in leading worship and supporting other more practical activities is regarded as significant in developing the Christian identity of the school. Services arranged for the school at the parish church are very well supported by parents.

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

The Headteacher leads by example, displaying a caring and compassionate nature and a strong desire to engage the whole school community in promoting the school's Christian distinctiveness. She has a very clear vision for the future of the school and articulates, with some passion, the ways in which she believes the children's experiences of the Christian message are enriched at Feering School. The Headteacher ensures that all members of staff appointed to the school identify how they are able to support the Christian ethos of the school, creating a unity of purpose. The school governors have a prominent profile and work hard on behalf of the school. They are very supportive of the developments taking place under the Headteacher's leadership. However, whilst the school's vision is clearly expressed by members of the school community, there is currently little documentation to support a development cycle focussed on the school's distinctive Christian character and how it is to be maintained. The school is aware that there is no mention in documentation of the school's approach to succession planning and the way in which the school is addressing the professional development needs of staff and governors in meeting the school's planned objectives. The Collective Worship and R.E Co-ordinator has a very clear and insightful understanding of the developments which are needed in her areas of responsibility. She is keen to promote consistent practice, particularly in the use of prayers outside of collective worship. The energy and resourcefulness generated throughout the school by a cohesive staff, governors and parent body is ensuring that Feering School is at a very exciting stage in its development.