



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Capel St. Mary Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

The Street,
Capel St. Mary,
Ipswich,
Suffolk
IP9 2EG

Diocese: St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich

Local authority: Suffolk

Dates of inspection: 1 November 2011 [All Saints' Day]

Date of last inspection: 13 January 2009

School's unique reference number: 124749

Headteacher: Mr. D. Jackson

Inspector's name and number: Mr. R Miller 357

School context

This school is a little larger than average. Almost all of the 256 pupils are from a White British background and the vast majority live within the catchment area, the remaining 10% coming from surrounding villages and the town of Ipswich. The headteacher, a practising Christian, has been in post for 18 months.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Capel St Mary as a Church of England school are good

The school is led and managed by a thoroughly committed and passionate headteacher. He is well supported by staff, governors and parents. There is an excellent relationship with the local church and it's incumbent. These relationships feed the Christian ethos that underpins all aspects of school life. Parents speak very highly of the school as a church school, recognising the strength of care shown to their children and the respect they develop.

Established strengths

- The excellent school environment that encourages spiritual development.
- The Christian values that exist which have a positive impact on learners.
- The Christian vision which encompasses preparation for the future leadership of a church school.

Focus for development

- Involve pupils in planning acts of worship.
- Use the parish church more as a learning resource.
- Evaluate stakeholder views on the distinctive Christian dimension of the school to raise the profile still further.

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

Capel St Mary school community enjoys good relationships, which are based on Christian principles. Children feel happy, safe and secure. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are

good. They say they are valued as individuals and benefit from the warm family atmosphere. Christian values are evident in every part of school life particularly in the way pupils show care and concern for one another. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, enjoy coming to school, where they receive good support. All pupils seek to fulfil their potential and they say, 'Teachers are helpful, friendly and caring'. The Christian identity is apparent inside the school entrance with a large cross displayed and a Lord's Prayer banner. There are excellent wall displays inside the building, including the Aims of 'Care, Achieve, Persevere, Enjoy and Learn [CAPEL]'. There are quiet areas inside school for reading and reflection. These features, together with an outstanding outside environment, make a significant impact on pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by giving them the opportunity to continually reflect on the school's aims and values. This represents outstanding improvement since the last inspection. Developing links with other faiths remains an ongoing focus.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Acts of collective worship are good in quality. A visiting company of actors called, 'Open the Book,' complement worship by enacting stories from the Bible, in which there is enthusiastic pupil participation. These features have a positive impact on pupils' learning by increasing their religious vocabulary and setting the scene for a period of quiet reflection. The themes for worship lead on from lessons planned around the curriculum. Pupils are involved in presenting worship in school as well writing their own prayers. They are not yet involved, however, in planning worship. Children say that worship and prayer makes them think harder about moral and religious issues. Worship forms a very important and integral part of school life and takes place on a daily basis either together in the hall or in classrooms. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to pray. Pupils know and understand the Lord's prayer and have recently devoted a day celebrating it. Acts of whole school collective worship take place in the hall, which is transformed for this purpose with a lighted candle and cross on a table acting as a focal point. Pupils say they enjoy singing hymns during collective worship and that heard, during the inspection, was joyous. Worship makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development, by encouraging them to reflect on their relationships with each other and the wider world. Everyone derives strength from it, whether they have a faith or not. The vicar is a regular and welcomed visitor to school by both staff and children alike. By virtue of these visits, the Anglican tradition is valued and pupils' understanding of it grows.

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

The high quality of the leadership of the headteacher contributes significantly to the success of the school. He promotes a clear Christian vision by being a good role model to the whole school community. He leads by example, showing enthusiasm for all he does and displaying a caring and compassionate nature. Since arriving at the school he has secured a good team spirit among the school's managers and is preparing them well for the future leadership of a church school. They now have a clearer understanding of the development needs of Capel St Mary's school and are well involved in consultations to achieve these objectives. The school has high expectations of the pupils, and their attitudes and behaviour towards each other reflects this. The school's management team and governors have established clear systems that inform the school's good self-evaluation process. The foundation governors contribute to its success by being active monitors of the school's progress. Governors and staff share the Christian vision for the school. Parents, pupils and the parochial church council do too but their views have yet to be formally evaluated in an effort to raise the profile of this church school still higher. This represents satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The nearby parish church is used for the major Christian festivals but pupils say it is not used enough as a learning resource. Parents speak very highly of all that the school does to ensure their children flourish as individuals. The capacity for sustained improvement is good.