



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Soham St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Sand Street
Soham
Ely
CB7 5AA

Diocese: Ely

Local authority: Cambridgeshire
Date of inspection: 16 June 2010
Date of last inspection: March 2007
School's unique reference number: 110828
Headteacher: Richard Liddington
Inspector's name and number: Simon Windmill 182

School context

This is a much larger than average primary school. A large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small but increasing number speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities is close to the national average. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Soham St Andrew as a Church of England school are outstanding

Under the inspirational leadership and influence of the headteacher, this school is firmly rooted in its Christian principles, which are evident in all aspects of its life and work. This nourishes a very caring and happy environment, with a calm and peaceful atmosphere which is highly valued by pupils, staff, governors, parent and visitors.

Established strengths

- The Christian ethos, which is evident throughout the school
- Caring relationships, which provide an environment where pupils flourish
- Pupils, who behave exceptionally well

Focus for development

- Embed the new management and staffing structure, with its stronger emphasis on the school's Christian values
- Increase pupils' involvement in collective worship and evaluate its impact
- Develop pastoral care by linking it with the school's house system

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

The school's Christian ethos is evident to all. Relationships between staff, pupils and governors are outstanding, and pupils say they enjoy school, and feel valued and safe. Many staff and governors are practising Christians, which helps to sustain the school's ethos. New pupils are individually welcomed into the school through home visits and an after school welcome club, and parents are given welcome packs in their own languages.

Behaviour is excellent. It is maintained through an effective and popular reward system which encourages pupils to earn 'Golden Time' activities of their choice. On the rare occasions when pupils' behaviour slips below expected standards, they know what will happen as a result, and that when they put their behaviour right, the incident is closed. One pupil said, 'If we do something wrong, and we put it right, we get a fresh start.'

Pupils with learning or emotional difficulties are supported by the learning mentor, who works with small groups and individuals. She caters for a very broad range of barriers to learning, from basic literacy through to physical, emotional and medical problems, and counselling.

Playground buddies and school council members enhance this support, and the vicar offers pastoral care for staff and pupils. The school also plans to link pastoral care with the school's house system. The school council has an effective role in expressing pupils' views on how its budget is spent.

Pupils readily contribute to charities, empathising with those less fortunate than themselves, which enhances their awareness of different cultures and faiths.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is exceptionally well planned and delivered. The Christian gospel is central, and presented to pupils in exciting and stimulating ways. Pupils enjoy collective worship as an important part of the day. They help with setting up the worship space with candles and artefacts.

Pupils are very attentive and eager to join in with worship. They particularly value the range of visiting worship leaders, such as the 'GenR8' team and Mr Tinkler's fuzzy felt presentations. The vicar and Methodist and Baptist ministers regularly contribute to leading worship.

Pupils write their own prayers, and are aware of a range of purposes and styles of prayer, such as thanks, praise, asking for help, healing and forgiveness. They would welcome more opportunities to take part in planning and leading worship.

All staff contribute to leading worship, and the high proportion of Christian staff, governors and members of the wider community makes for very strong links with the church. Governors attend collective worship once or twice each week. The church is used for the main Christian festivals, and collective worship reflects the Anglican church calendar.

Pupils are encouraged to take time for quiet reflection, not only in collective worship, but also in other lessons. In addition, plans are in place to create an area for quiet personal reflection, and to increase pupil involvement in collective worship, but formal evaluations of its impact on pupils are not yet fully in place.

Parent and pupil surveys indicate very high satisfaction with worship, showing that it has an important and valued role in the school.

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

The headteacher and staff are fully committed to sustaining the school's Christian foundation. Under the inspirational leadership of the headteacher, the management team has reviewed its structure to make it more effective, while ensuring that the school's strong Christian ethos remains central to the school. This change is fully supported by the very effective governing body.

The school's Christian aims and vision are agreed, understood and shared by staff and governors. Pupils too are aware of the school's values, and enjoy the caring, happy and safe environment the school generates. Fair play is an important part of the ethos – summed up by a pupil who said, 'We want to win, but we won't boo if we lose.'

Governor meetings are always supported by prayer. The high proportion of governors involved with the local churches has developed an excellent understanding of the distinctiveness of the school. Many families worship in the local churches, as do members of the wider community, who hold the school in very high regard.

Fostering pupils' spiritual and moral development is a vital part of the school, and staff and governors have a role in monitoring and evaluating these areas of pupil development. The school enjoys regular visits from the Bishop's visitor, and makes good use of the resources available from the diocese.



Judgement Recording Form (NSJRF)

This form is to be attached to the main SIAS report and returned to the diocese in which the school is situated and to the National Society.

Name of school Soham St Andrews
Address of School Soham, Ely
 CB7 5AA
School URN 110828
Date of inspection 16 June 2010
NS Inspector's Number 182
Type of Church school Voluntary Controlled
Number of pupils 421
Phase of education Primary

Has Diocesan Quality Assurance been obtained for this report? Yes

Rating 1-4

How distinctive and effective is the school as a Church school?	1
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How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?	1
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What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?	1
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How effective is the religious education? *	N/A
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How effective are the leadership and management of the school, as a church school?	1
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The school meets the statutory requirement for collective acts of worship	Yes
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The school meets the statutory requirement for religious education *	N/A
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** Voluntary Aided Schools only*