



Forest Row CE Primary School

Diocese of Chichester

Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools

Inspection Report



Date of inspection:	17 June 2010
Name of inspector:	Hilary Ferries
NS inspector's number:	276
School address:	Hartfield Road Forest Row East Sussex RH18 5DZ
Unique reference number:	114504
Status:	Voluntary Controlled
Number on roll:	240
Age range of pupils:	4-11
LA:	East Sussex
Name of chair of governors:	Ken Marke
Name of headteacher:	Emma Twaddell (Acting)
Date of previous inspection:	May 2007

The inspection of denominational education and collective worship in the school was carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

Description of the school

The school is in the village of Forest Row. The majority of pupils come from the local area, but families also travel from other villages and towns. There is high pupil mobility. A few families attend the parish church and other local churches. The headteacher left the school at Easter 2010 and there is currently an acting headteacher (the deputy head) and an acting deputy headteacher.

Summary judgement

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Forest Row CE Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

The acting headteacher, ably supported by the acting deputy head and strong supportive staff team, works well with the governors, parents and the local community to provide a caring and calm learning environment, based on Christian values, where everyone is special. There is a strong commitment to the school as a Church school, alongside an acceptance of and respect for the different beliefs in the community.

Grade: 2

Established strengths

- Every child is respected and valued as a unique individual and the quality of relationships, based on the Christian purpose, is very good.
- The ambition and drive of the acting headteacher and leadership team for this Church school.
- The involvement of the clergy in the life of the school and the relationship with the parish church.
- The wide range of stakeholders involved in the evaluation of Collective Worship and the way the school listens to their views.

Focus for development

- Update the school documentation to include the vision of the school as a Church school.
- Review class assemblies to ensure consistency across the school.
- Develop robust, systematic monitoring and evaluation systems for the governing body of the school as a Church school and the results in the school improvement plan.
- Develop the classroom environment to reflect Christian distinctiveness.

The school meets the statutory requirement for Collective Worship	Yes
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The school, through its distinctive Christian character is good at meeting the needs of all its pupils.

Christian values underpin the work of the school, but there is a range of mission, vision and purpose statements which have been introduced at different times. As a result, it feels as if there is a clear vision for the school as a Church school, but this is not reflected in the documentation. The school ensures that all pupils have the support and guidance they need in terms of academic progress, nurture and Christian care. The provision map outlines the interventions for different groups and the school benefits from a counsellor and play therapist. Pupils interviewed talk about the culture of respect and how everyone is valued and considered to be special: 'We are all special and we all have talents'. Year 6 like their black sweatshirts that show they are special and they welcome the extra responsibilities they are given. There are worry boxes and bully boxes where pupils can put their problems and pupils interviewed said they find these helpful. The relationships between all members of the school community are good. Staff interviewed said that they believe the strong, supportive care and family feel are among the main strengths of the school.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development are good. The curriculum has good opportunities for spiritual development and staff are not afraid to address and discuss those 'big and puzzling questions'. During the inspection the curate had been invited into school to discuss such questions including 'Where is God?' A wide range of beliefs are held in the community and pupils say that, although it is clear that the school is a Christian community, everybody's view is respected: 'you are not told what to think and everyone is listened to'. School council members are very positive about the difference they make to the school. The entrance hall and main hall in the school have Christian symbols and focus, an issue for development addressed from the last inspection, but there is nothing in the classrooms that shows this is a Church school and the school may wish to develop this area to strengthen the Christian distinctiveness further.

Grade: 2

The impact of Collective Worship on the school community is good.

The school has developed a clear pattern of Collective Worship, with themes for the year. Planning is carried out by a small group, including the vicar and worship coordinator, which supports teachers with their detailed planning. This group has just reviewed the worship policy to reflect practice. Pupils are positive about worship. They particularly enjoy opportunities to participate. Once a week there are class assemblies. One pupil interviewed said that she found them supportive because they 'give you a chance to relax and to think'. However, interviews with pupils suggest that the quality of these is varied across the school and there is little formal recording of them to suggest otherwise.

Prayer has been a focus. Following input from the clergy, each class has made a prayer book, used in worship. Pupils' understanding of Anglican practice is good. A vesicle and response is used in worship and the class prayer books include the Lord's Prayer and the prayer of St Richard. Pupils interviewed talked confidently about the major festivals in the church's year. The worship observed during the inspection was received positively by pupils. A good atmosphere was created by music and the singing; there was a clear focal point for worship. The vicar led the worship and used a story to engage the pupils well. All key elements of good worship were present and one pupil interviewed afterwards said: 'Assemblies always have a meaning and they help me understand them'.

Grade: 2

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

The acting headteacher articulates a clear Christian vision for the school and this is shared by members of staff. Pupils and parents are also aware that this is a Church school and this is made clear to all new pupils. A small group, including the clergy and leadership team members, has been working on the toolkit on a rolling programme and have identified areas of development. These are being addressed and the impact can be seen – for example in the development of prayer. However, the toolkit is not shared with the wider governing body or linked to the school improvement plan which limits the extent to which the whole governing body is able to support the development of the school as a Church school.

There are very strong links with the clergy, the parish church and local community. The parish magazine is in school and the church and school publicise and pray for each other's events. The clergy team are regular visitors, both to lead worship and to provide pastoral support. There are several events during the year in which both village and school participate. The school is able to develop as a Church school because it actively consults with a wide range of stakeholders to find out what they think and then acts upon it. This has been the case particularly with Collective Worship which has improved since the last inspection.

The governors are keen to appoint a new headteacher, having put comprehensive systems in place to recruit with the full support of the diocese and local authority. However, the acting headteacher, ably supported by the acting deputy and the staff is committed to the school as a Church school and is making sure that the school continues to develop and grow.

Grade: 2