

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Great Yeldham St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Road
Great Yeldham
Halstead
CO9 4PT

Diocese: Chelmsford

Local authority: Essex
Date of inspection: 30 June 2009
Date of last inspection: November 2000
School's unique reference number: 115069
Headteacher: Maria Trappitt
Inspector's name and number: Simon Windmill 182

School context

Great Yeldham St Andrew's CEVC primary school is a small village school, serving Great Yeldham and its surrounding area. Almost all pupils are White British. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is above average because the school takes in pupils with special educational needs from other schools. The school holds several national awards, including a Royal Opera House Creative Partnership award for 2 years.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Andrew's, Great Yeldham as a Church of England school are good

Great Yeldham's Christian ethos and values are embedded in school life and have a strong positive influence on pupils' values and attitudes. As a result, supportive and caring relationships give the school a family atmosphere which is evident to all.

Established strengths

- Supportive relationships with and between pupils and adults, based on Christian values.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural growth, which enhances pupils' personal development
- High standards of behaviour

Focus for development

- Review and evaluate the impact of collective worship on pupils
- Provide more opportunities for pupils' active involvement in collective worship
- Explore ways of linking with multi ethnic schools to develop a broader understanding of different cultures

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

The school's Christian ethos is seen by the headteacher, staff and governors as a vital part of school life and its Christian values are reflected in the outstanding care and support for pupils and staff. This results in a warm, welcoming, inclusive and friendly family atmosphere, in which pupils feel valued and safe. One pupil said, *'What I like most about the school is being friends with everybody'*. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They know and obey the rules and understand the consequences of breaking them. This is because they have a say in what the rules should be through an effective school council, and teachers take account of pupils' suggestions about the rules.

Pupils get on exceptionally well with each other, and with the staff, who provide excellent role models. This greatly helps pupils to develop self-confidence and independence. They like coming to school, and enjoy their lessons – a pupil said, *'Learning is always great fun!'*

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong. They enjoy quiet reflection in a special quiet area.

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The school's Christian identity is reflected in good displays of children's work around the school.

The school has built excellent liaison with agencies which support pupils and families with emotional and mental health issues. As a result, the school is able to take in pupils from other schools, who can then benefit from the school's expertise in these areas.

Pupils' awareness and concern for the needs of others is encouraged, and they willingly help to raise money for a number of charities, such as the Shoebox appeal, and fundraising for the church.

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The impact of collective worship is good

The head, staff and pupils see collective worship as a central part of school life, and it is soundly based on Christian values. It always includes prayer, singing and teaching. An icon of St Andrew provides a focal point for worship, sometimes with candles or other foci. Pupils enjoy collective worship, and the opportunities they have to take part in it. Pupils say they like acting out parables or answering questions, and they also value their time for quiet reflection during worship. They have a good understanding of the purposes and styles of prayer, such as saying thank you, saying sorry, and asking for help or forgiveness.

Pupils sometimes use their own prayers during worship and prayers are also said at lunchtime. They would welcome even more opportunities to contribute to worship in this and other ways. Worship is well planned around themes that reflect the main festivals of the Church year, many of which are held in the church, such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest. The pattern of collective worship includes worship in key stages. Teaching staff and the Rector contribute to leading worship, and pupils particularly enjoy his contribution. He supports the school in other ways, such as giving pastoral care to staff and pupils, and advising on RE.

The school keeps records of collective worship and has carried out some informal monitoring of it, but does not yet have a system for evaluating the impact of collective worship on pupils.

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

The headteacher gives excellent leadership to the school. She has a clear vision for school developments. For example, after a time of turbulence, when three left teachers at the same time, she led a workforce restructure, and the new staff team is now operating exceptionally well. She is well supported by the staff and governors, who also contribute to the life of the school, and have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The chair of governors described the headteacher's leadership as *'Fantastic!'*

The staff feel valued and involved in the school's development. They work very well together as a team, and provide mutual support for each other. This contributes greatly to school's happy and supportive atmosphere. Staff and governors have been strengthened by overcoming the difficult times it encountered. The strong and effective links with the local church support the headteacher and staff in promoting a distinctive Christian vision for the school, with Christian values underpinning its life and work. For example, the school and church work closely together, forging close links, and the church is used as a learning resource for such things as RE and collective worship. The staff, Rector and governors are working together in preparing to introduce the new Essex RE syllabus.

Parents make a significant contribution to the school through fundraising and arranging events, which involve the wider community as well as the school. Links with the wider community also include mutual exchanges of information about school and community events, and shared social events such as fetes and carol singing. All these activities make a very good contribution to community cohesion.

The recommendations of the previous inspection were to use the school environment to encourage pupil's spiritual development, plan RE and collective worship separately, and seek pupil perceptions of collective worship. These have been successfully implemented. The school's self-assessment is accurate, and provides a good basis for further developments.

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