



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Kenn Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Kennford, Exeter
Devon EX6 7TX

Diocese: Exeter

Local authority: Devon

Dates of inspection: 17 June 2014

Date of last inspection: 30 June 2009

School's unique reference number: 113397

Headteacher: Neil Swait

Inspector's name and number: John Rudge 704

School context

This small rural church primary school has recently entered into a full federation partnership with a local community primary school. It also has links with a local Pre-School. Some aspects of the new partnership, such as the governing body, are already in place, with provision for continuing governance in relation to the school's church status. The school is situated some distance from the local parish church.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Kenn Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The quality and clarity of vision for its ethos and distinctiveness has enabled the school to build on its already outstanding provision at the time of the previous inspection
- The strong Christian ethos of the school permeates and enriches all aspects of its community life
- The school's ethos underpins the quality of each pupil's learning and sense of well-being
- Religious education (RE) and collective worship have a high status in the school, and are central to its ethos and distinctiveness

Areas to improve

- Enable all pupils to gain a deeper understanding of the distinctively Christian element in the school's values
- Ensure that all stakeholders fully develop their leadership skills in the church school context.

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

The school has a strong Christian ethos. This has a wide-ranging impact on the whole school community. Pupils readily accept the Christian ethos as a natural part of school life. The integration of the Christian ethos into all parts of school life makes a strong contribution to pupils' progress in their learning, which overall is above national expectations. They feel that the supportive, encouraging and secure atmosphere of the school is an important factor in their enjoyment of learning. They have a clear, practical understanding of the meaning and application of their core values. They can discuss them openly and demonstrate how they feature in their daily lives, for example how forgiveness is important in healing broken relationships. The school is aware that it needs to help some of its pupils to gain a deeper understanding of the distinctive Christian elements in its values. The strong Christian ethos embraces the qualities of openness and inclusion, so that all pupils, whatever their family background, feel equally valued and at home. One pupil spoke very eloquently about the importance of this sense of inclusion. The teaching of RE is central to this open ethos. As a result, pupils have a clear appreciation of how faith helps to guide Christians in making moral choices. RE also provides opportunities for pupils to explore a range of beliefs and cultures. This diversity and openness gives pupils the understanding and freedom to make up their own minds about how to express matters of faith and belief. The school therefore fully serves its purpose both as a church school and as a school for all the local community. Pupils are well behaved and feel very secure that any incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Members of the parish church, including the incumbent, are very active in the life of the school. Pupils value their contribution and treat them as a natural part of the school community. However, the distance of the school from the church makes it very difficult to sustain a range of joint activities.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is understood as including a wide range of activities, based on prayer and reflection, at different times and places within the school. These are encouraged as a natural dimension of the daily life of the school, and classrooms provide a more informal context for worship in which pupils readily take part. The formal daily act of collective worship offers a very clear focus for all these activities and a means of expressing and experiencing the sense of Christian community which is so important in this school. The effectiveness of collective worship is demonstrated in the quiet and reflective atmosphere in which it takes place, with a strong focus on the Bible, on Jesus as the distinctive example of Christian living, and on the school's core values as expressing the goals of its community life. Typically, a range of leaders and a variety of activities cater for all pupils and reflect the educational context in which collective worship takes place. It is a careful blend of formality and informality, using symbols, elements of liturgy, story-telling, music and drama to good effect. The Anglican tradition is clear but not obtrusive, for example in the regular use of greetings and responses in which all the pupils join enthusiastically. There is also a strong visual element, through the use of pictures and artefacts, which further contributes to the engagement of those who learn best through a variety of experiences. The school is very responsive to suggestions for improvement, through its well-devised programme of monitoring and evaluation, so that the views of pupils are taken into account in shaping the activities of collective worship. Pupils in turn value the way in which they can contribute to enriching the experience of worship, for example in the way in which they now take part much more extensively in the actual planning and presentation of the acts of worship. Many pupils readily use the opportunities provided to express their own ideas and thoughts through personal prayer.

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

The quality and clarity of the school's vision is a particular strength. It has enabled the school to continue to develop its strong Christian ethos since the previous inspection. The school has a clear vision for developing its strong Christian ethos. This is underpinned by the high profile given to RE and collective worship, both of which are well led. The distinctive ethos is very clearly communicated through the school's environment and through its website, and pupils recognise where its values impact on their daily lives. These further improvements have taken place against a backdrop of staff changes, considerable pupil mobility and the move towards a federation. A particular strength of leadership is evident in the care taken to monitor and evaluate the quality of the school's ethos. This is carried out very effectively through the headteacher's annual Church School Improvement Plan, which is sharply focused on clearly attainable goals and discussed and followed up by governors. This is a school with a clear and focused sense of direction. It knows how to put the right processes in place to make improvements a reality. It is not afraid to experiment, or to draw on a wide range of ideas and suggestions from various sources (for example, in planning collective worship) or to ensure that all stakeholders have a clear voice in how they would like to see the school move forward. The leadership has been careful to address fully the matters for development raised in the previous report, especially with regard to improving the quality of pupils' experience of collective worship. They have also engaged with the Diocese of Exeter with regard to training. The teaching staff are consequently committed to, and feel included in, the school's Christian ethos. Whilst the current management is committed to a shared model and pattern of leadership, the school rightly aims to extend this amongst all its stakeholders.

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