

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Wreningham VC Primary School

Ashwellthorpe Road
Wreningham
Norwich
NR16 1AW

Diocese: Norwich

Local authority: Norfolk
Dates of inspection: 21st & 25th June, 2007
Date of last inspection: 12th November 2002
School's unique reference number: 121095
Headteacher: Mr Richard Burbage
Inspector's name and number: Mrs D Lenton 460

School context

Wreningham is a small Primary school, which serves the community of Wreningham and two villages close by. Almost all pupils are of White British descent and have English as their first language. The head teacher has only been in post since the beginning of the summer term, 2007.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Wreningham VC Primary School as a Church of England school are good

The practical working out of Christian values becomes immediately apparent on entering Wreningham school. The children and adults in the school demonstrate Christian care and concern for each other. Children are articulate in their understanding of why rules are in place and parents are strong in their support for the Christian values that underpin the school community.

Established strengths

- Excellent relationships within the whole community
- The strength of the children's independent thinking and ability to reflect
- The strong input of the established Foundation governor
- Honest and careful reflection on the part of the leadership and management team on what still needs to be achieved

Focus for development

- Communication of the school's pride in its Church of England status through signage, the school prospectus and the web-site.
- The development of the children's role as leaders of worship
- The creation of a definite focus in the space used for Collective Worship.

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

Speaking to children and adults in the school community, it is clear that the school is underpinned by a strong set of Christian values. The children are well represented by the School Council and Eco Council. Both groups take a strong lead within the school. The school demonstrates confidence in the children's ability to take real responsibility and encourages the School Council to organise the rota for the "Buddy System", for example. This operates for the benefit of children who need a friend, particularly at playtimes. The children take their roles seriously and confidently. Younger children are encouraged to speak

on the School Council, and older children demonstrate respect for their points of view. The school is dedicated to being eco-friendly, and places a strong emphasis on taking care of God's creation. Children are encouraged to think of others beyond their immediate community and support such charities as the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

The children are keen to learn and enthusiastic about their teachers, who were described as "fair but firm". Parents interviewed said that their children are keen to learn and enjoy coming to school. The newly appointed head teacher says that Christian values are deep within Wreningham School and he reflected on the distinctiveness of the school as a church school. He said that he was conscious of the very strong moral ethos and the sense of community at Wreningham, compared with good community schools that he has worked in previously.

The children's ability to discuss their school is extremely good. They spoke warmly about the school. They said that the size of the school allows them to know the names of all the other children. Behaviour is very good in the classroom and in the playground. Often younger children play with the older. Ofsted describes this as "exemplary". There is a very good system of developing individual class rules as well as whole school rules developed with the children. The playground is well thought out so that children can find different areas in which to play with others, or to sit quietly by themselves. When the weather allows there is an excellent system of allowing older children to eat their sandwiches at the benches and tables outside, giving more space for younger children in the rather cramped hall.

The recent Ofsted inspection commented on the fact that pupils achieve well whatever their needs. The school has a very good over-all view of children's learning. Staff move into different classes once a week so that they can get to know all the children. The Enhancement Group is an excellent opportunity for children to mix with other year groups, in music and art. Parents said that all the staff are dedicated to caring for the children in the school and that each child's specific needs are well met.

There is a good range of extra curricular activities for the children to choose from for a school of this size, including gardening, sewing and the year six Computer Club for Girls (CC4G). The school is extremely good in catering for children who show musical ability and individual instrumental lessons are available. The church provides opportunities for the children through after school clubs. One club that runs each half term is "Time Out", which is run by the Faith Mission Team and is quite well attended. There is also a holiday club held in the summer holidays for present and past pupils organised by the Foundation governor.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The children spoke with enthusiasm about the importance of collective worship to them. They said that it is a time in which they speak to God – to thank Him and to ask Him for help. One boy commented that if this didn't take place each day, "a part of the school would be missing." It was evident that many children pray at home quietly by themselves. The established Foundation governor said that Collective Worship has a positive impact on the way in which children treat each other: it brings a closeness to the community. The children showed considerable insight in understanding right from wrong by commenting that reflecting on Bible stories allowed them to consider the consequences of their own actions.

During the Collective Worship observed the children came in quietly and respectfully. They listened well and answered questions thoughtfully. The theme for this time was based on the story of Jesus healing the ten lepers. The children were given the opportunity to reflect about what impact this might have on their own lives. The children were able to articulate their ideas well by explaining that sometimes it is important to be alongside those who were in trouble and needed help. The singing was good and the children said that they enjoyed it.

All the staff lead collective worship, which is planned by the Collective Worship Coordinator. She plans a six-week rolling programme of themes. The Foundation governor informally monitors Collective Worship. Although the school has correctly identified the areas that need addressing to improve Collective Worship, there is not, as yet, effective monitoring and evaluation in place. The local church community takes an active part in leading worship including the local Rector, curate and Foundation governor. One of these usually leads every

two weeks.

Although children do read prayers, play musical instruments and are occasionally involved in leading worship for special occasions this was not observed on the day of the inspection. However the children are keen to be more involved and the school has identified this in the School Development Plan, to foster the children as Worship Leaders.

Most of the major Christian Festivals are celebrated. The number of children in the school makes it difficult to use the church building very often for services because it is so small. It is also approximately half a mile from the school along a narrow lane. However it is used for the Christingle service and for work in Religious Education. The local Rector is keen to strengthen the ties with the new head teacher to see if it is possible to use the church more often. Often the village hall is used for special festivals such as Harvest. At the Leavers' Assembly Bibles are presented to the children, paid for by the church community and presented by the church warden.

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

The new head teacher, although only very recently appointed, has instigated effective meetings with all staff, including teaching assistants and midday supervisors, to engage them in helping to develop the aims and direction of the school through Performance Management. He, with the governors, has taken a strong lead in identifying several areas that need to be addressed to move the school forward in its distinctiveness as a church school, as seen in the Self Evaluation Form.

The school is part of the Norfolk Well-Being Project as the school recognises the value of staff well being for the school to be successful. This was observed during the inspection. The school plans to work more closely with the Diocese to develop the school as a church school.

The local church community is very small but is acutely aware of the church school within its midst. The school is regularly supported through prayer. The school is regularly mentioned in the parish magazine. The very positive influence of the established Foundation governor of the school is evident. She works closely with years five and six in delivering an excellent and exciting interactive programme called Bible Explorer. She leads Collective Worship and acts as a pastoral support for all the children and staff. She is also a member of the Parochial Church Council and the Benefice Council. A second Foundation governor has been recently appointed and she is very committed to helping to strengthen the relationship with the local community. The children are already effective in their support of the local community through carol singing and joint fund raising.

Parents recognise the value of the Christian foundation upon which the school is laid. One parent said that she specifically chose the school because it is a church school. All agreed that the strength of the Christian values creates the caring, family atmosphere. There is an excellent atmosphere of inclusiveness in the school and parents said that the open-door policy that the school adopts allows them to visit whenever they wished to talk about any issues that might concern them. Annual questionnaires re-enforce this view.