



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

**Codicote Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Meadow Way, Codicote, Hitchin, Herefordshire SG4 8YL**

Diocese of St Albans

LA: Hertfordshire
SIAS Inspection: 2nd July 2009
Previous S23 Inspection: 7th June 2006
URN: 117392
Headteacher: Mrs Elizabeth Pollard
SIAS Inspector Name: Mel Adams
SIAS Inspector No: 58

School Context

The school is a one form entry primary school with a nursery attended by 228 children. It works in close partnership with the parish church of St Giles, Codicote. The majority of children live in the village. Achievement in the school is very good and well above national averages by the end of key stage 2.

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

Christian principles modelled by staff who are highly committed to the academic, social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of each individual child, create an ethos in which children have rich opportunities to flourish. Children understand the importance of acting on the principles and values they learn in school, and know that they help them to make right decisions in their day to day lives by giving them an awareness of what Jesus would do.

Established strengths

- The partnership between the church and the school
- The commitment of the Head teacher, Vicar, staff and governors to developing the distinctiveness of the school as a Church school.
- The Christian ethos which enables children to flourish

Focus for development

- To further enhance the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a church school by ensuring that all stakeholders are involved in evaluation of the schools Christian values.
- To further develop opportunities for children to develop as responsible citizens by considering how the Christian character of the school can develop understanding of their role in the national community.
- To provide opportunities for spiritual development for staff and governors

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

Staff, parents and governors speak of Christian values and principles modelled by adults in the school. Through these principles, supported by the school code of conduct and values taught in assemblies, Religious Education, and other curriculum areas, children say they are always learning, are taught how to be good friends and never leave anyone out. As a result, behaviour is excellent as is the climate for learning, and achievement is consistently high. Learning in Religious Education provides rich opportunities for spiritual development and learning about the Christian faith and other faiths. This enables children to explore common values, and one child described how this had helped him to respect different religions. Children have a growing understanding of their responsibilities and stewardship of the world around them through involvement in eco-schools and care of gardens and animals. A number of charities are supported around the world, giving children an understanding of their contribution to the global community. The school has yet to consider how the Christian character of the school can develop understanding of their role in the national community. Relationships throughout the school between staff and children are excellent. The Head teacher describes a non-judgemental approach creating a culture in which the focus is on educating the child supported by mutual support, honesty and openness amongst the staff. The school is continually developing its Christian character, illustrated by the development of assembly as a Christian act of worship by the Vicar and Head teacher. The environment provides opportunities for spiritual development and children's learning is celebrated around the school including a stunning year 5 art display depicting reflections on the theme of 'Where is God?', one child writing 'I believe He's in our mind and we rely on him for life'. A recently developed courtyard area and woodland area provide spaces for quietness and reflection during the day.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Children engage well during collective worship, saying that it makes them peaceful and calm and gives them time to think about God. They enter and leave respectfully to music and a slide show or candles and a cross are displayed to further enhance the setting for worship. They are able to articulate the importance of the principles and values they learn about such as truth and patience and say they go from assembly wanting to find opportunities to exercise them. Children speak of feeling personal affirmation during assemblies expressed by one child as, 'Be yourself, it's ok to be me, God made me'. Staff are willing to adapt their planning if necessary to follow up assembly themes with their classes. The regular assemblies taken by the Vicar and Vice Chair of governors based on biblical themes are enjoyed by staff and children who are inspired by 'Jesus principles' which they say enable them to make choices about their day to day lives. Opportunities are provided to develop understanding of Anglican tradition and practice, particularly through church attendance at a number of festivals throughout the year. The Head teacher and Vicar plan assemblies to include values such as acceptance, respect and friendship. These can be linked to Bible stories or modern day parables such as 'the teddy who forgot his

values', observed during the inspection, which led children later to reflect on the importance of their own values.. Songs are chosen to support assembly themes, including a daily sung prayer and the singing is excellent.

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

The vicar describes how the underlying Christian ethos of the school is underpinned by Christian values which seek to build a loving and caring community in which people can flourish and develop a sense of the spiritual. This is affirmed by parents, children, staff and governors who agree that values such as right and wrong and thinking of the needs of others teach principles which are adopted by children. Christian values are made explicit and planned for through the Religious Education curriculum and collective worship and these are regularly reviewed. The majority of parents believe that the schools Christian character has an impact on the behaviour and attitudes of the children. Parents have yet to be involved in evaluation of the school's Christian values. There is a clear shared understanding of how Christian values steer key leadership decisions including dealing with matters of concern. Awareness of the range of needs in the community, enhanced by tracking of children's personal development enables the school to use strategies such as a circle of friends to develop relationships both within and outside school. Evaluations of assemblies which feature in the annual development plan have led to developments such as the installation of the projector and screen to enhance the setting for worship. Consideration has been given to succession planning within the school and the school supports the professional development of senior staff from other schools. Staff and governors are highly supportive of each other and have access to a range of professional development opportunities. They have yet to consider how they could benefit from opportunities for spiritual development. The partnership between the church and the school is very strong. The Head teacher writes for the monthly parish magazine, children sing in the church choir and the school is used by the church for holiday clubs. The vicar's leadership of school services is greatly appreciated and enjoyed, and he supports the school community pastorally. Good links with the community include participation in village events and a joint initiative with the parish council on the school travel plan. The church prays for the school and a number of parents also pray for the school on a regular basis.