



The Diocese of St Edmundsbury
and Ipswich



Nacton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

The Street
Nacton Village,
Ipswich,
Suffolk,
IP10 0EU

Diocese: St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich

Local authority: Suffolk

Dates of inspection: 16 June 2008

Date of last inspection: 18-19 April 2005

School's unique reference number: 124738

Headteacher: Elizabeth Ditton

Inspector's name and number: Robert Miller 357

School context

This is a small rural school, contained mainly in an Edwardian building, which is currently undergoing modernisation. The school forms an integral part of village life and opens its doors to the local community. There are 89 pupils on roll of which, almost all, come from White British backgrounds. Four pupils have English as an additional language. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is well above the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Nacton as a Church of England school are good

The school is led and managed by a thoroughly committed and passionate headteacher. She is well supported by staff, governors and parents. There is a vibrant relationship with the local Church, to feed the Christian ethos that underpins all aspects of school life. Parents speak very highly of the school as a church school, recognising the strength of care shown to their children and the respect they develop. The capacity to make the necessary improvements is good.

Established strengths

- The high expectations by staff of pupils' academic achievement, attitudes and behaviour.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is excellent.
- The headteacher, vicar and foundation governors' efforts to promote a distinctive Christian vision for the school.

Focus for development

- Challenge and encourage the school community to share their views on the vision for a distinctly Christian church school.
- Adopt and implement a target within the school improvement plan directly linked with raising the profile of Nacton as a church school.
- Provide a Christian focal point for acts of collective worship.

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

Nacton school is outstanding in its relationships, which are based on Christian principles. Children feel happy and secure. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent. They say they are valued as individuals and benefit from the warm family atmosphere. Academic achievement is high in relation to prior attainment and their attitudes to learning and behaviour are both excellent. Christian values are evident in every part of the school particularly in the way pupils show care and concern for one another. Parents say that the children are 'taught to be kind in a nurturing environment'. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, love coming to school, where they receive excellent support. All pupils seek to fulfil their potential and they say, 'Teachers are good, friendly and caring'. The Christian identity inside the school is evident through the wall displays, including prayers. There are good displays of Judaism, which show pupils' handiwork, and an understanding of the principles of other faiths. These features, together with the teaching of religious education, which children enjoy, have a positive impact on the excellent provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school has identified the need to increase the visits to places of worship and visitors of other faiths.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Acts of collective worship are good in quality. Worship forms a very important and integral part of school life. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to pray. One said, 'It lets your emotions out' Pupils know and understand the Lord's prayer. All pupils say the grace at lunch and pray at the end of the school day. This keeps them mindful of their relationship with each other and the wider world. Acts of worship take place in the middle area, which is not currently transformed for this purpose. It is devoid of a cross or lighted candle for instance, to make it a special place and to provide a focal point. Pupils say they enjoy singing hymns during collective worship. This is an improvement on the last diocesan inspection, when pupils expressed a desire to sing more often. Older pupils enjoy being able to take part in role-play where they are able to demonstrate showing care to others. Worship makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development, by encouraging them to reflect on their relationships with each other and the wider world. Everyone of all faiths and none derive strength from it. The vicar who is a frequent visitor to the school leads worship and the Christian Youth Ministries group, who actively include pupils in planning collective worship, supplements this. By virtue of these visits, and regular visits from members of the church community who lead worship, the Anglican tradition is valued and pupils' understanding of it grows.

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

The high quality of the leadership of the head teacher, contributes significantly to the success of the school. She promotes a clear Christian vision by being a good role model to the whole school community. She leads by example, showing enthusiasm for all she does and displaying a caring and compassionate nature. She has secured a great team spirit among the school's managers. The school has high expectations of the pupils and their academic achievement reflects this. The school's management team and governors have established clear systems that inform the school's good self-evaluation process. The mechanisms in place are effective and the work of the foundation governors contribute significantly to its success. The areas identified for school improvement are accurate but currently lack a specific target directed towards promoting the Christian vision for Nacton as a successful church school. Worship and religious education are well monitored and evaluated in an effort to continuously raise the good standards that already exist. The church is used for some services and as a learning resource. Governors and staff share the Christian vision for the school. Parents and pupils do too but have yet to be formally surveyed for their views in an effort to raise the profile of this church school still higher. Parents speak very highly of all that the school does to ensure their child flourishes as an individual.