

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Sheering Church of England (VC) Primary School
The Street
Sheering
Bishop's Stortford
Herts
CM22 7LU

Diocese: Chelmsford

Local authority: Essex
Date of inspection: 18th September 2012
Date of last inspection: March 2008
School's unique reference number: 115099
Headteacher: Mrs Julie Lorkins
Inspector's name and number: Andrew Jones 723

School context

Sheering C of E (VC) Primary school is a popular small school serving the village of Sheering and also drawing from surrounding villages and nearby Harlow. Currently there are 107 pupils on roll, the vast majority of whom are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average as is the number identified as having Special Educational Needs. Since the last inspection the buildings have been thoughtfully extended and now provide attractive and versatile accommodation.

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

Sheering's TERRIFIC values; Trustworthy, Enthusiastic, Respectful, Responsible, Independent, Fair, Inclusive and Caring, weave their way very effectively through all areas of school life. They successfully underpin the strong relationships that exist between all members of the school community and enable the children to flourish in a positive and nurturing environment. One child said, "At our school nobody is ever left out."

Established strengths

- The very high profile given to Christian values, reflected in excellent behaviour, very good relationships and a happy, purposeful learning environment
- The inclusive nature of the school, where all children and members of the school community are equally valued
- Strong links with the local church and community, including a nearby pre-school

Focus for development

- Involve all members of the school community in the next review of the school's Christian values
- Tie together school improvement planning, continuing professional development and performance management when reviewing Christian distinctiveness and values in order to ensure cohesion
- Ensure that the impact of the Kenyan partnership through a shared curriculum project enables the children to see beyond material advantage or disadvantage

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

All stakeholders very clearly identify and respond to the high profile given to Christian values. This is an outstanding feature of the school. A child explained, "Our values help us to follow Jesus and be like him ... they make a big difference to how things are in school." One of the parents said, "My child knows the school values very well and often repeats them at home." The school's Christian character and values are effectively promoted through displays, collective worship, very positive relationships between all members of the school community and through the celebration of good behaviour and achievement. For example, the school's

'Roll of Honour' book commends individual children in terms of the values they have displayed in and around the school. Children are consistently affirmed with the result that they are confident and well-motivated. As a result of the positive and prevailing Christian atmosphere of the school, the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and sense of what it means to be part of an inclusive, caring Christian community are good. The school's strong sense of community and mutual respect successfully combine to create a strong sense of belonging, of shared responsibility and concern for others. This is clearly demonstrated by the charity work undertaken by the school, based in part on decisions made by the school council. The school's Christian character positively influences the children's appreciation of their place in a wider community. This is demonstrated locally in the effective links with elderly people through the distribution by the children of harvest parcels. The partnership with Kiamuringa School in Kenya is successfully enabling the children to see their place within a global community. A child said, "Finding out about the school in Kenya has taught us to be grateful for what we have." Stakeholders all relate well to one another. One parent commented, "Everyone feels on the same level," while another parent described the school as being very welcoming and inclusive.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The children are always deeply engaged during collective worship and very enthusiastically express their appreciation for the varied opportunities they have to participate through drama, spontaneous prayer, singing and reflecting on open-ended questions. The school has recently introduced an excellent process for children to evaluate collective worship and they confirm that as a result of this, changes have been made; for example, the children are now able to choose many of the worship songs that they sing. Collective worship is very inclusive and affirming, with the result that children and all members of staff feel equipped and prepared for the day. During collective worship, mutual respect for one another and a deep concern for others are very clearly linked to Biblical teaching and therefore make a highly effective contribution to children's spiritual development. Collective worship reinforces the school values extremely well thus making a very positive impact on the daily life of the school. For example, in a Bible story told during collective worship, the children were asked, "Which of our values did Peter show and how could we show the same values today?" The children very successfully develop an understanding of Anglican traditions and practice through prayer, singing, using symbols such as a candle, displays, the involvement of the rector and observance of the Christian calendar.

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

School leaders and governors effectively promote the Christian character of the school resulting in a school community that is inclusive and caring while at the same time committed to school improvement and raising achievement. Monitoring and evaluation involving governors, members of staff and children are rapidly improving, for example as seen in the recently introduced procedures for collective worship. The children readily relate the school values to their own attitudes and behaviour with the result that a calm and purposeful atmosphere is evident in lessons and throughout the school. The vision and values of the school, produced by members of staff and agreed by governors are well-communicated to all stakeholders through weekly newsletters, displays and the Roll of Honour book. Regular feedback from children and parents enables school leaders and governors to ensure productive change and development. The partnership between the school, church and local community is an outstanding feature of the school where all three are interdependent. The links with the nearby pre-school are very positive, enabling new children transferring from the pre-group into school to settle in very quickly. The rector's involvement in school life and the headteacher's regular reports to the PCC very effectively contribute to the partnership between the school, the church and the local community. One parent described the partnership between school, church and local community as being like the sides of a triangle where all are equal. School leaders and governors are committed to both preserving and developing the school's Christian distinctiveness but have not linked this yet to performance management procedures.