



**The Diocese of St Edmundsbury and
Ipswich
National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report**

Creeting St Mary Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

All Saints Road, Creeting St Mary, Ipswich, Suffolk IP6 8NF

Diocese: Ipswich & St Edmundsbury

Local authority: Suffolk

Dates of inspection: 29 May 2012

Date of last inspection: 6 July 2009

School's unique reference number: 124770

Headteacher: Lyn Spall

Inspector's name and number: John Rudge (704)

School context

This small 4-9 primary school is located close to the parish church, which is currently served by a locally ordained priest pending a new benefice appointment. Children are drawn to the school from the surrounding areas and towns as well as from the local village, including some from Roman Catholic families. The school is currently oversubscribed, but is due to expand to include years 5 and 6 in new accommodation.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Creeting St Mary VA Primary School as a
Church of England school are outstanding**

The school has successfully built on the outstanding quality of its provision at the time of the previous inspection. Its strength lies in the way in which all elements of its provision as a Church school are drawn together in a coherent pattern. This gives strong and clear direction to the school's mission, ensures that all members of the school community are pulling together, and the children are able to experience Christian faith as a supportive context for their learning.

Established strengths

- The school's promotion of its Christian values is highly effective in providing a safe and engaging environment for learning
- The overall ethos of the school, of collective worship and of religious education (RE) are coherently linked
- Very good and effective links with the parish church strongly support the school's Christian ethos

Focus for development

- Consolidate and extend best practice within the expanding age range of the school
- Develop pupils' ability to assess their own work and that of their peers to support target setting and building further progression into the RE programme

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

The school has, collectively, a strong sense of its mission as a Church school. This is evident both in relationships at all levels as well as in the atmosphere created in the school's environment. It is also clear in the way the school ensures that its Christian ethos is coherently maintained across all its activities and its distinctiveness promoted within a welcoming and inclusive framework. As a result, both parents and children identify strongly with the way the school is run. Some parents, not all from an Anglican background, enrol their children in this school specifically because of its distinctive ethos. Teachers are particularly responsive to parents, carers and other family members, who feel valued and included as part of the school community. Some play an active role in supporting learning and activities for enrichment. Children say that they feel safe and cared for and recognise that this supports them in their learning, especially as individuals with different abilities and needs. Building on its firm foundation at the time of the previous inspection, the school has developed its emphasis on core values. Children show that they are aware of the importance of these values in the way they behave and relate to each other. They are also aware that this ethos is part of the school's character as a Church school, and older children can relate values, such as respect for others, to key Christian teachings and stories. At the time of the visit the school was extending the relevance of some of its values to its work on Olympic qualities and to HM the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

A particular strength of collective worship in this school lies in the clear and explicit way it draws together a variety of strands of its daily life. These include RE; prayer and reflection at other times of the day; the way themes and values are displayed in classrooms and celebrated through awards; and the very effective links between the parish church and the school. On the day of the inspection, the theme of the teaching in RE moved directly into collective worship as learning about the Queen's Diamond Jubilee was transposed into the medium of worship, celebration and reflection. This gave fresh meaning to the words of the national anthem. Leadership of RE and collective worship were drawn together in the planning and presentation of the occasion, so that the children were able to share in a coherent experience at different levels. Collective worship is typically characterised by a balanced blend of lively activity and quiet reflection. A strong Anglican element is present not only through the close church links but also through the pattern of worship, including simple rituals, appropriate symbols and shared responses, as well as more formal prayers. Children enjoy taking part in the presentation of collective worship and welcome the prominent place given to it in drawing the community together. It is very well planned, building on the Values for Life programme and blending this with celebrations both in church and in school, marking key points in the Christian calendar and the life of the community. It is effectively monitored and evaluated formally by governors.

The effectiveness of religious education is outstanding

The school has a strong commitment to the importance of RE in the curriculum. The school's RE policy affirms the central role of RE and of Christian faith. It also extends to providing a wider exploration of religions within an inclusive framework, in line with the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus for RE. In turn, this and other enrichment and charitable activities support the children's understanding of and respect for less familiar cultures. The child's personal exploration of 'wonder', in the sense of both curiosity and discovery, is closely linked with collective worship. These two aspects were brought together in the observed lessons which provided a clear example of progression, enabling both younger and older children to reflect on 'God save the Queen'. Children thought about what these words might mean in the context of the Queen's life and duties, particularly in her commitment to serving all her people. The teachers responsible for RE in Key Stages 1 and 2 show a thorough understanding of the two subject attainments, drawing on some of the helpful guidance provided by the diocese. RE is carefully planned and presented, using a range of resources, and taught through lively and varied activities. Consequently, the children make good progress. They are supported by regular and careful assessment of their work and monitoring of their achievement. The school is aware of the need to develop more personalised forms of assessment to further support target setting and progression.

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

The coherence and clarity of the school's ethos and distinctiveness as a Church school stem both from the leadership provided by senior staff and governors, and from the sense of shared commitment and vision of all groups in the school community. Foundation governors work well in supporting and enhancing the quality of the school's community life, and are prepared to hold the school to account by efficient monitoring of its provision. They have a well-defined programme of visits to the school, and are careful to ensure that the overall ethos of the school is maintained in all its activities. Further strengthening of the school's leadership and management is provided through the effective and close links with the parish church which are mutually beneficial. The whole process is underpinned by the sense of commitment to Christian service towards the children and their families. This is exemplified in the governors and staff prayer group and in the way in which the 'I wonder' approach is being shared with parents to enhance their understanding of the spiritual life of the school. The children themselves are encouraged to exercise leadership and to participate fully in the spiritual life of the school, as well as its academic life. Because of this, the school affirms their insights and perceptions and involves them in evaluating and influencing such matters as school rules. The school leadership has responded positively to points raised in the previous inspection report. It is also aware of the importance of extending its ethos and distinctiveness into the proposed expanded Key Stage 2. As such, it has very good potential for further development.

SIAS report June 2012 Creting St Mary CE VA Primary School, Ipswich IP6 8NF