



Doddinghurst Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Junior School

Church Lane, Doddinghurst, Brentwood, Essex, CM15 0NJ

Diocese of Chelmsford

Essex LEA

Type of school:	Voluntary Controlled
SIAS inspection:	23 rd February 2009
Date of last inspection:	25 th June 2002
School's Unique reference number:	115124
Name of Headteacher:	Mrs Margaret Cooper
SIAS Inspector:	Revd. S. Lynch, NS 128

School context

The school serves the local village and most pupils come from there, transferring from the neighbouring Infant school, which is not a Church school. Pupils' attainment on entry is above average. Very few pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds or speak English as a second language. The number of pupils with learning difficulties, or statements of special educational need, is well below average. The school has Investors in People and Healthy School accreditation and Activemark award.

Summary Judgement

Doddinghurst is an outstanding church school. Firmly embedded Christian values and practices are reflected fully in the inclusive learning environment, in which every child, and adult, really does matter. Excellent, caring relationships are observable between all members of the school community. The physical environment of the school develops Christian themes beautifully. Worship and prayer are focal points in the everyday life of the school community. Well established links between the school and both church and village community enrich the lives of all.

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Established strengths

- A wholly inclusive ethos which is based on a clear Christian vision and a calm underpinning which nurtures every child to become an articulate, caring and reflective, whole individual.
- Excellent relationships between all members of the community, based firmly on Christian values of affirmation and kindness.
- An attractive learning environment which stimulates thought, awe and wonder through excellent displays and use of the natural environment.
- Very well established links with the local church and wider community.

Focus for development

- To introduce and evaluate planned new methods of assessment in Religious Education.
- To use developed success in creating an appropriate ambience in impending new building and development work.

How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?

The school meets the needs of all learners outstandingly well. All pupils are valued and feel able to contribute to the whole community. Display work across the school is attractive and stimulating; work in the hall (on Baptism, the Lost Sheep, Creation stories and Open the Book) and in classrooms includes a contribution from every child. A colourful display in the school entrance also celebrates pupil achievements outside school. In a Year 3 RE lesson all pupils were keen to answer questions and able to reflect well on special animals as themes from Hinduism were related to personal experience. Pupils are articulate and well mannered and demonstrate a respect for all. Relationships across the community are excellent: pupils speak of 'lovely teachers' and parents also speak with enthusiasm of the good relationships in school and value the high visibility of the Headteacher. Her calmness underpins the pleasant atmosphere in school. 'Kindness' is a key word, used across the community. A termly award, given in a church service, celebrates special kindness by a child in the year group leading that service. Christianity forms the basis of the RE curriculum and classroom teaching is enhanced by input from Bible Explorers, and the ALF programme, which pupils are able to recall with enthusiasm. However pupils also highly value teaching about Judaism and Hinduism and are able to explain very clearly the value of this for their own lives. Pupils were also keen to point out the relatively new cross in the hall and in each classroom, which they find a helpful focus. Excellent use is made of the superb site location and plans to develop this further include input from all stakeholders. In a gentle way the Christian faith enriches the daily life of the whole school community.

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What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?

Collective Worship is outstanding. It is at the centre of the life of the school, every day and at the start and end of the school week. Every class has their own book of prayers written by pupils, which are used at lunchtime and at the end of each day. They are keen to contribute to a developing whole school prayer book. Pupils and staff take these prayers seriously and pupils write thoughtfully, looking beyond the school to express concern for the wider community. They speak with pride of their school and of giving to charity. Clear Christian symbols such as the candle and cross provide a focus for daily worship and pupils value the built-in quiet space, during which lights are dimmed. In evaluation a pupil commented that 'it gives me time to reflect, you don't get to do this in other schools'. They evaluate worship regularly through written comments and are enthusiastic about participating in school worship and especially enjoy leading services termly in church. Parents spoke warmly of a moving Advent service in church and pupils enjoyed a dance with lights they had made. Very strong links with the local church and other local Christian communities enhance worship and pupils speak of the fun that they have in the weekly 'Open the Book' assemblies, and are able to recall clearly Bible stories and their meanings. Anglican belief is supported through themes based on the church year, for example, in an act of worship about Jesus' temptations pupils were aware of the meaning of Lent. They sing well and with understanding.

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How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The Headteacher has worked with vision, energy and Christian commitment, along with a supportive governing body and dedicated, stable, staff team, to underpin the whole school community. Religious Education is well co-ordinated and pupil work demonstrates good progress, especially in some well devised assessment tasks. Year 3, for example, showed a good grasp of aspects of their visit to the church. Parents welcome a clear but unobtrusive Christian vision and appreciate the Headteacher's open door policy. Foundation governors are enthusiastic and keen to promote the school within the community. Very clear lines of communication ensure that all stakeholders are involved fully in the life of the school, including the church and wider community. The weekly newsletter is appreciated by all and includes opportunity for regular feedback to the Headteacher. The school contributes to the parish 'Link' magazine which ensures good relationships. It also works closely with an on-site Breakfast/ After-school and Holiday Club so that care for pupils is streamlined. Transition from the next door Infant school is made comfortable for children through excellent relationships between the two schools. School leaders ensure that the Christian faith is gently inherent in all aspects of school life, for example the Christmas newsletter included prayers written by the Head Boys and Girls at start and end.

1