

Spotlight on a Suffolk school

Trinity Church of England VA Primary School

Lavenham Way, Comb, Stowmarket IP14 2BZ

Trinity CEVAP is a small Church school with 155 pupils on roll. 18% of the school have SEND, with 2% on EHCPs. 21% attract pupil premium funding and 12.3% are from Black or Minority Ethnic groups. We opened in September 2014 and started this school year with a 10th Birthday party on our first day back, which included a School Eucharist Service, hosting a visit from Bishop Martin and the Director Of Education for the Diocese- Jane Sheet, and a tea party for our whole school community. The children behaved fantastically and though a busy start – we all had a wonderful day.

At Trinity attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has always been above National. Phonics scores have also been consistently above National.

What is the school's vision?

Though our vision statement is much longer than this, basically we want our children to experience” **life in all its fullness,**” Jn 10:10 - which for us means

- having a fabulous childhood filled with happiness, laughter, fun, acceptance and love;
- to enjoy and have a real quest for learning more and more
- to believe that there are no limits to what they can achieve and do – and where barriers exist that they can overcome them
- to grow up into kind, confident, strong and decent people who respect and seek to understand others and who are ready for the next part of their journey when they leave us.

We have three rules – We are kind, We welcome all others and We look after God's creation. These rules underpin everything we do, here everyone is important, valued and respected- even when things have gone wrong! We base our interactions with all others on respectful conversations and an understanding of where each person is coming from – though not always easy this approach works for us.

Curriculum and pedagogical approach

Our curriculum is broad and based on the National documentation, we do not narrow it at any point – believing that all children should have access to the same high quality texts, information and teaching across each year and in each subject.

We have a real passion for learning to be as active as possible, so continuous provision continues right up to the end of Year 2 and every class in KS2 has an activity slot each afternoon where activities such as Gardening, Dance, Storm Break, and nature sessions are held. In addition to this our playtimes are real highlights of the school day – we have invested in bikes, scooters, go karts, den building materials and lots of other outdoor equipment, so children can really be children and have fun. We strongly encourage parents to buy second hand uniform (50p an item) as we expect our children to get muddy and wet. I believe that behaviour here is so excellent because of the great play opportunities our children have.

Great playtimes, where children follow our simple rules also mean that they are ready to learn when they return to class. Across the school we introduced

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Rosenshine's principles three years ago and the WalkThru CPD programme last year. We have definitely become better at this over time and now have fully embraced the programme with online resources, hubs, a CPD lead and a timetable mapped out for implementing what we all feel the next steps are for us as a school. This means every class has the same high expectations of behaviour, engagement and outcomes for pupils and our pupils thrive in this environment. Sharing good practice and coaching each other is another important element of the programme – we teach with doors open and facilitate staff visiting each other to learn and advise – this is probably the best aspect of the programme – learning from each other.

Clear, high expectations, continuous provision, active learning, activity breaks and playtimes all result in pupils who are able to engage fully when presented with learning tasks – we believe that the time we invest in being active and playing/ learning through play, contributes significantly to the excellent learning behaviours across the school.

National Statistics and headlines have highlighted the increasing poor mental health of people in general but especially in children, so last September we introduced a programme called Storm Break. This has had a huge impact on our children's ongoing understanding of how they can keep themselves mentally healthy and teaches them resilience, how to cope and what to do when things go wrong, or they are worried or anxious. It also develops a growing awareness of emotional responses to situations and how these can be positive. An example of impact would be how our Year 6 children coped with the SATs tests – the results say more than I could, and of course the behaviour of our children and their maturity in dealing with problems speaks volumes.

We identified Reading as an area to improve further, - all subject development plans reflected this. We reviewed our curriculum to ensure that we had a wide range of books woven through topics and subjects and also introduced whole class story time – so all children could listen to books being read to them. We all had to relearn things – especially allowing children to listen uninterrupted to the story being read without turning it into a comprehension exercise. We introduced reading buddies across the school, raised the profile of reading for pleasure through things like an outdoor library where our whole community have access to books to borrow/ swap/ keep; staff and pupils wrote and shared book reviews in whole school assemblies and this year took part in the Delivering Better Value (DBV) reading programme where borderline Yr 6 pupils were trained as mentors and then read every day with weaker Yr 3 children – all the Year 6 children reached age related expectations in SATs.

If asked what is great about leading this school I would say everyone works hard and does their best, when issues arise we come together to find the best way forward – we are a team who are honestly supportive of one another so we all become better. While we continually seek to improve, we have realistic expectations – so do not try to change too much at once but keep things simple, and above all else we are kind to others and to ourselves!