National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Woodhall Spa St Andrew's Church of England Primary School.

King Edward Crescent
Woodhall Spa
Lincolnshire
LN10 6RQ

Diocese: Lincoln

Local authority: Lincolnshire
Dates of inspection: 30 April 2012
Date of last inspection: 10 July 2007
School's unique reference number: 120675
Headteacher: Mr. J Whalley
Inspector's name and number: Robert Fish NS 490

School context

St Andrew's Church of England Primary School is a larger than average primary school serving the community of Woodhall Spa. There are very few pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school has gained several awards for its commitment to pupil welfare, particularly in the fields of sport and social media. It is one of a small number of schools to have gained the UNICEF Respecting Rights Award 2012.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Woodhall Spa St Andrew's Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

Sound Christian values can be found in all areas of the life of the school. It is a very friendly, welcoming and happy school where pupils enjoy working and playing together. Pupils cherish their school and show commitment, dedication and a clear understanding of its foundation. The school is seen as a force for good in the community and strives to develop enquiring minds and a desire for lifelong learning.

Established strengths

- Well-motivated pupils who approach lessons in religious education (RE) in a positive and affirming manner.
- The value the school places on personal development, personal well being and intellectual curiosity.
- The quality of relationships that contribute to a calm and focused environment in which purposeful learning takes place.
- The robust links with St. Peter's Church that bring tangible benefits to both institutions.

Focus for development

- To involve pupil's more in the planning and presentation of Collective Worship.
- Strengthen the school's declarations of its Christian foundation in policies and documentation.

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

St Andrew's Church of England Primary School is a bright and attractive school. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere throughout and this is complemented by pupils who show respect and consideration for all. Great store is placed upon the diversity of individuals within the school and there is strong evidence to show that everyone is treated fairly, regardless of race, religion or ability. The school's commitment to Christian values can be found in the strength of the relationships between pupils and adults. The approach to helping pupils of all ages experience faith is not ostentatious or overburdening but open and sincere, giving many pupils a residue of faith that can be referenced in later life. Staff and governors are united in their desire to create opportunities for children to develop a sense of Christian responsibility for themselves, the school and the community in which they live. The school is less successful, however, in proclaiming this commitment in documents, booklets and brochures. Pupils believe their school is good because it encourages them to lead healthy lives, creates an environment where all can work together and 'encourages us all to try hard to achieve our goals'. All pupils speak of their school with pride using phrases such as 'lucky to have such a good school' and 'you can trust people here'. Teachers use discussion forums, discrete questioning techniques and role-play successfully in lessons that focus on religious topics. This gives many older pupils a philosophical insight of the moral and cultural issues that build the key principles of faith. Well presented displays of pupils' work in all areas of the school create a lively environment for learning. Sobering in their stark simplicity, striking displays on religious themes and celebrations help elevate the Christian merit of the school and bring a powerful message to all. Members of the school council take their duties and responsibilities seriously and understand by being good ambassadors for the school they are contributing to its success. They are proud of the hard work that has enabled the school to provide an outdoor activity area. In addition to the core curriculum pupils have the opportunity to take part in film making, reporting as journalists and a long established tradition in sporting activities. When writing poetry that explores the events of the Crucifixion, one pupil described the death of Jesus as a time when, 'a pure spirit was released to the world'. To the question about what else they learn at school as well as knowledge of facts and information one pupil responded, 'we learn life skills'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.

Collective worship is central to the life of the school and has a beneficial impact on pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils enter the school hall in a reverent and purposeful manner and maintain a contemplative atmosphere throughout. The lighting of a candle signifies the call to worship. This provides opportunities for all pupils to explore their understanding of faith and the chance to share their Christian experiences and generosity of spirit. Pupils participate freely and sing sweetly with heartfelt enthusiasm. Particularly emotive was the singing of 'Father in my life I see', a simple but poignant, statement and refrain, Christian song that clearly had meaning to those present. Pupils appreciate that coming together to worship is a means by which they can connect with God. The concept of prayer is both real and relevant to many. Pupils link effectively the message from the Parable of Talents to the way they are encouraged to develop their skills through hard work and application. Themes for worship are grounded to the local Agreed Syllabus but incorporate ideas and principles from commercial schemes that bring together social and emotional aspects of learning. There has been significant progress on the focus to develop worship highlighted during the previous denominational inspection. It is well planned and has relevance throughout the day for many. The school's own evaluations of worship reveal that pupils enjoy hearing stories from the bible, learning about how God wants us to live, singing together and the reflective power of pictures and music. However, although pupils contribute to worship through responses to prayer, under direct questioning and as 'actors' in the telling of a parable, as yet, they have little input in planning and leading the experience.

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

The headteacher, RE coordinator and foundation governors are clear about what constitutes a school founded on faith. Their vision for the school is one where an air of Christian love

underpins, inspires and enriches all and where opportunities for learning stem from the sound base of Christian values. It is the Christian ethos of a church school that is not pretentious but one that wears its status in a subtle and discreet manner. The lessons in RE observed during the inspection were planned well, delivered in a warm and encouraging manner and inspired learning. Of particular note is the way in which teachers encourage young pupils to think about things that are special to them. Where older pupils consider the impact of the Five Precepts of Buddhism they make astute comparisons between their own understanding of God's character and the beliefs of Buddhists and the teaching of Buddha. In an attempt to provide balance, to what is largely a mono-cultural institution, the school places great store on its international links and the exposure to cultural diversity this realises. Monitoring and evaluation of RE by the coordinator takes place on a regular basis. Evidence shows attainment in RE to be in line with that of other subjects and teachers who are secure in their teaching of the subject. These evaluations, allied to appraisals by foundation governors, provide an effective mechanism through which the school judges its performance as a church school. Members of staff share a perceptible commitment to the ethos of the school and provide effective role models for pupils. This contributes greatly towards pupils' appreciation of how to behave in a variety of situations. The school plays an active role in the life of St. Peter's Church and in the local community. The vicar is a welcome visitor and someone whose presence in school is admired and appreciated. Pupils, parents and staff speak of their enjoyment when attending church for school services. Older pupils have provided a number of pieces of written work on The Acts of the Apostles for 'A Garland of Verses', a diocesan inspired retelling of the Bible through children's voices. A highlight for the pupils is the annual visit to the cathedral to take part in services celebrating the diocesan fellowship of schools.