

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Wootton St. Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Wootton Village

Boars Hill

Oxford

OX1 5HP

Diocese: Oxford

LA: Oxfordshire

Dates of inspection: 7th March 2006

Date of last inspection: October 2000

School's Unique reference number: 123223

Headteacher: Shona Howie (Acting)

Inspector's name and number: Alan Thornsby 137

Summary Judgement

Wootton St Peter's is a good church school with some outstanding features. The leadership of the acting headteacher is building on the strong support of the church to create a distinctive ethos for the school.

Established strengths

- The passion and vision of the acting headteacher for the school Christian ethos
- The quality of the care and support of all in the school
- The strength of relationships between the whole school community

Focus for development

- To develop a system of recording and assessing collective worship to support the school's self-evaluation.
- To ensure that written tasks in RE enable children to achieve the same standards as in practical activities.
- To ensure the right for parental withdrawal from RE and worship is included in the School prospectus

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

The school is good at meeting the needs of all its learners through its distinctive Christian ethos.

This is because of the caring ethos of the school, the mutual respect that exists between all members of the school community and the development of pupils' self-confidence. The acting headteacher communicates her clear vision of a Christian school with great passion. This is understood and shared by all. Pupils are very aware that they are valued and appreciated, whatever their own abilities. They readily recognise and respond to those less fortunate than themselves, such as the 'Chickens for Africa' appeal. They enjoy belonging to the school and articulate their thoughts well. Pupils have confidence in the staff. This is a positive response to the high expectations set for them by the school. Parents describe the distinctiveness of the school as 'it is like a second home.' Displays reflect the welcoming ethos and Christian values of the school as well as encouraging high achievements from the pupils. These achievements are recognised and celebrated with the presentation of merits and shields as well as in displays of newspaper articles.

Children know that the Christian values of forgiveness and being given a second chance underpin the way the school manages behaviour. They are confident their feelings matter because there is a system of hand signs used to convey happiness or anxiety and staff respond to these on an individual basis. The school provides good experiences to enable pupils to develop spiritually. The quality of these permeates the lives of pupils and enriches their awareness of beauty in key times in people's lives.

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

Collective worship has a good impact on the school community.

This is because of the high profile that it is given which ensures it filters into every area of school life. Classroom teaching supports worship as issues explored in assemblies are often reconsidered and developed in the classroom. Worship is enjoyed by adults and children and they take the opportunities to reflect and pray as well as responding afterwards in their actions. Pupils know that worship is a special

time and this is clear in their singing. Children are given a rich experience of worship in various groupings and in different places. They worship as a whole school and as junior and infant classes. This happens in school, in church for key festivals and in an Ascension Day assembly on Jam Mound. This outdoor assembly is one example of where parents and members of the community join with the pupils. The school makes effective use of a portable 'altar' that provides a focus for worship in the hall as well as in classrooms.

The school uses a four-year cycle of themes, which is based on the church year and includes Christian values that reinforce the Christian ethos. Although the individual acts of worship are good, relating to the pupils own experiences, there is no system in place for the recording or evaluation of worship. This makes it difficult for the school to assess the richness of the children's worshipping experience or to know where to make improvements. This was an issue in the previous inspection and has not yet been addressed.

How effective is the religious education?

Religious Education is good

Religious education has a good impact in the school because of the very positive attitude to the teaching of RE which is related to the life experiences of the pupils. Achievement is good and this is in line with other foundation subjects. Pupils benefit from a range of teaching styles that result in high quality discussion. This helps them to use appropriate religious vocabulary when making links between faith and everyday life. Godly play has been successfully used with younger pupils to help them understand and empathise with Bible stories. They also know about the role of food in celebrations and are able to recall their previous learning about wedding ceremonies in different religions. Older pupils have used their knowledge of church services to create and lead a range of orders of service. This included rewriting words to hymns as well as creating parish notices and conducting a burial service for the school fish. The excellent standard of pupils' oral and practical work is not reflected in the quality of their responses to written tasks in their books. It is clear they achieve highly when activities enable them to make links between what they have learned in RE and their own experiences of worship. They are motivated to work hard when there is a real purpose to their work.

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

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

The leadership and management of the school are good because of the vision of the acting headteacher for its Christian ethos. Her passion in making sure that everyone understands how this makes a difference to the school has made an outstanding impact. All the staff provide good examples of role models in their relationships with other people and these are mirrored by the pupils. Governors are very supportive of the school in their classroom visits. This informs their role of 'critical friends' to support school development.

The views of parents are actively sought and taken into account by the school. Parents are aware of the open honest dialogue that exists between all members of the school community. This reinforces the partnership between school and home. At present, their right to withdraw children from RE and collective worship is not clearly stated. There is an active school council and these pupils are fully committed to being the voice of all pupils.

The Church makes a significant contribution to the life of the school. The vicar is a regular visitor to school, leading worship and teaching. This enables a close relationship with the pupils. He makes opportunities to speak to pupils, parents and staff who may need a sympathetic ear. Pupils visit church as a resource as well as to celebrate calendar festivals and special events such as Ash Wednesday, Easter Harvest and Christmas. The church supports the school in help with resources such as those for Godly Play, which is also used in church. Some Church members are frequent visitors in school as 'reading counsellors'. This has a great impact on pupils reading skills in addition to their relationships with Christian adults.