

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Colwich Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Main Road
Colwich
Stafford
ST17 0XD

Diocese: Lichfield

Local authority: Staffordshire
Dates of inspection: 20th March 2008
Date of last inspection: 29th March 2004
School's unique reference number: 124244
Headteacher: Mrs Nicola Clay
Inspector's name and number Mrs Marianne Phillips:

School context

Colwich C of E (VC) Primary is a small rural school with 115 pupils on roll. It serves the village of Colwich and has very strong links with the Anglican Church. The head is in her second year at the school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Colwich as a Church of England school are good

The commitment of the headteacher, minister, and other practising Christians and their support for development of the school as a distinctive church school is evident. This is impacting positively upon the children. Christian signs and symbols are used to good effect.

Established strengths

- The Christian commitment of the headteacher, minister, chair of governors and staff and their vision for Colwich as a church school;
- Links with the Church and the variety of ways in which the school is developing as an extension of the church;
- The ways in which Christian values are being developed in children and how they are used in their day to day school life;
- The caring Christian ethos;

Focus for development

- To encourage further parental involvement in collective worship on a regular basis;
- To explore effective ways of using the new 'Community room' on its completion that will more widely promote spiritual development, for example through its use as a sanctuary;
- To consider ways of developing a Christian focus in each classroom linked with the opportunity for individual prayer and reflection on a daily basis;
- To investigate ways of formalising the existing self evaluation systems for worship by using criteria on which to base judgements and giving children a 'voice' in the process.

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

All pupils feel valued and special. "Everything and everybody is special ; we are all unique and that makes me feel proud". Also "there is a bond between teachers and children; we respect each other". The school's Christian values are impacting on pupils encouraging them to "Learn to love, Love to learn, Learn for life". Older children take their responsibilities very seriously especially in their care and support of the younger pupils. "We are encouraged to take responsibility for the younger ones and if we set a good example they act like us and may remember us as good people in the future". The 'family groups' work well and promote the nurturing and caring for others through shared weekly meals. The School Council is an

important group within school who feel their work “helps to prepare them for later life”. There is a desire amongst the children for the work of the Council to be developed and extended giving the pupils a more effective voice. This idea is good. Behaviour is very good and conflicts, if they happen are dealt with compassionately. The 'Golden Rules', which are discussed and agreed by the children are respected and appreciated. Learners say they feel safe and welcome and parents acknowledge their enthusiasm about the school. Displays are prominent and give effective support to the religious education and other aspects of the curriculum.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The in depth reflection by the pupils and their response to prayer is an outstanding feature. “When I pray I get to speak to Jesus, God and all my family that have gone to heaven”. And “when we go to church it's a nice atmosphere; thoughts go up to heaven, because I am talking to God”. Children express the desire to write their own prayers. “I would like to write my own prayers as this would give me a chance to express my feelings”. Also “if our prayers were written down we could put them in a class book and pick our favourites to read”. These are good ideas. The act of worship, witnessed, encouraged a positive response from the pupils, staff and governors. The '4 stations' in Christ's journey through the Easter story, including the 'Last Supper' had been well planned and were effectively used by the staff to develop an understanding of those events 2000 years ago. The circulation of the 'Posada' crosses to encourage individual prayer and reflection was effective, helping to promote spiritual growth. The school intends for the crosses to be a feature in each classroom in the future. This is one of many very good strategies the school is considering to further develop its Christian focus. Learners are able to talk about the key Christian festivals in the churches year. The Lord's prayer, music, candles are used to good effect in worship. The worship is distinctly Christian, supporting its Anglican tradition. The church is used regularly. One pupil “liked worshipping with other Christians” and felt “the church isn't a building, it's what's inside”.

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

The Christian commitment of the leadership and worship team to the development of the Christian vision for the school is evident. They run a 'Tuesday Club' which is a Christian club, and is very popular with the children. The prospectus, aims, website and all documentation, proclaim the school's Church status. There are systems of monitoring and evaluation in place that are linked to school improvement planning in relation to its church status and collective worship. These systems are a focus for development and on-going review. The 'Vision and Values' day enabled the staff, governors, parents and the minister to share their views and opinions about the school. A smaller working party refined the original ideas and this led to the school's agreed aims and 'Mission Motto'. The school has very effective links with the local church and minister. The parents speak highly of the school and are keen to promote its Church distinctiveness. “It is very important to have my child introduced to church and faith early to allow for choices to be made in later life”. The close relationship between the church and school is welcomed and initiatives such as the 'Coffee and Fun' mornings are well supported. There are productive community links. “The school seems keen to get involved in whatever goes on in the village e.g. The Best Kept Village Competition”. The parents are enthusiastic about the new 'Community room' and are looking forward, with anticipation, to the ways in which the school will develop its use. This is an area of focus for the school on its completion. The school is also looking for ways in which the children's understanding of other faiths can be developed in the future. Foundation governors have attended training in relation to their role in promoting the school's Christian character. The headteacher feels she has benefited from the support and advice from the diocese. Her enthusiasm and leadership, uniting this school family is having an impact upon the children and the community.