

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Hutchinson Memorial Church of England Voluntary Aided First School

Uttoxeter Road,
Checkley,
Stoke-on-Trent.
ST10 4NB

Diocese: Lichfield

LEA: Staffordshire

Date of inspection: 17th January 2008

Date of last inspection: 23rd June 2003

School's Unique reference number: 124333

Name of Headteacher: Miss J Davis

Inspector's name: Mr A R Gilroy

National Society Number: 007

Context of the school

The Hutchinson Memorial Church of England First School is a small school, which educates a significant number of children from out of the immediate catchment area. The school is currently being led by an acting headteacher who has been in place since September 2007.

Hutchinson Memorial Church of England First School is a good school.

There is a distinctive Christian ethos, which has a significant impact on the development of all the pupils. Its effectiveness as a church school is built upon the committed leadership of the acting headteacher, senior staff and governors and the links with the parish and the wider community.

Established strengths

- The tangible Christian ethos of the school in which all pupils are nurtured and valued highly.
- An extremely supportive environment where staff work hard to meet the requirements of all the learners.
- The excellent support for Collective Worship by the vicar and foundation governors.

Focus for development

- Monitor the impact of Collective Worship and Religious Education on the learners through the contribution of all stakeholders.
- Widen the pupils' understanding of the worldwide Anglican Church and other faiths.

The impact of the distinctive Christian character of the school in meeting the needs of learners is good

Christian values have a strong impact on the personal and spiritual development of learners who are proud to be part of Hutchinson Memorial CE VA First School. The learners are confident, happy in their school and very well behaved. The environment provided for the learners by the staff, with significant contributions from the vicar and foundation governors, is enabling the children to develop a good understanding of the spiritual dimension of life. The staff meet the needs of all the learners in a variety of ways ensuring that all children, no matter what their background or ability feel secure, safe, and able to learn. The year three and year four pupils set a very good example to the rest of the school in the way they behave, showing respect and concern for one another and for the adults that they work with. The children have

many opportunities to develop their leadership skills through activities such as 'playground buddies' and the school council. They are very willing to share what they have learned in religious education lessons, collective worship and in other areas of the curriculum. The range of material covered has contributed very well to their spiritual, moral, cultural and social development. There is an effective school council, which ensures that the learners have a voice in school decisions. The atmosphere around school is relaxed and orderly. Relationships between learners and adults working in the school are excellent.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The daily act of collective worship is central to the development of the school. It is instrumental in developing the learners' good understanding of the spiritual dimension of life. They enjoy worship and gain a great deal from the experience. It very effectively addresses the matters that are important to young children, which are related directly to the teachings of the Christian gospel. Collective worship clearly contributes very well to the inclusive and accepting ethos of the school and emphasises the Christian understanding that everyone is valued and deserves respect. Pupil progress and achievement are celebrated and each participant is helped to feel part of a loving, Christian community. During the collective worship observed, the children displayed very good behaviour and showed that they were engaged in its content by responding in an appropriate, lively and interested way throughout. Children say that in collective worship, they particularly like the opportunity to *'think about God, to find out and learn more about him'*. They also say they like singing, hearing religious texts and acting out stories through drama. The children know the Lord's Prayer and can explain its meaning in their own language indicating that they have a good understanding. Through worship, the learners are gaining a sound knowledge of how faith is practised and its importance to them in their everyday lives. There are strong links with the local parish. These include the vicar and foundation governors who come into school weekly and very effectively lead collective worship. The children greatly enjoy their contribution and see them as a natural part of their lives. At least once a month the school visits the church for collective worship and through this learners are introduced to aspects of Anglican practice and ritual. Whilst the planning of collective worship identifies themes to be covered through the year, it would benefit from greater detail to enable effective monitoring to take place.

The effectiveness of Religious Education is satisfactory

The standards in religious education are similar to those achieved in the core curriculum. The quality of teaching is satisfactory to good and staff are well supported by the subject co-ordinator. The subject makes a significant contribution to the learners' spiritual and moral development, which is reflected in the life of the school. Religious education is recognised by governors and staff as being of particular importance in this Christian school and the subject's status reflects this. The learners' attitude to religious education is good; there is a high level of interest and learning is generally effective. The children have a good knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. Regardless of their faith background the learners are gaining spiritual and moral development and insight from their religious education. They are developing the ability to talk about their beliefs and acknowledge that staff and other learners take their views seriously. The learners make use of a religious vocabulary with which to express their understanding of and belief in religious teachings, quoting a number of Bible stories when discussing issues. The school makes good use of the diocesan scheme for religious education overseen by the enthusiastic co-ordinator. Whilst information concerning standards and achievement is derived from end of topic tasks, the next step for the school leadership is gaining information concerning the impact that religious education is having on the learners. Whilst the learners have some understanding of the Christian faith and other faiths worldwide, broadening their knowledge is the next stage in their learning.