

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Smallwood Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

School Lane
Smallwood
Nr Sandbach
Cheshire
CW11 2UR

Diocese: Chester

Local authority: Cheshire
Dates of inspection: 30th January 2008
Date of last inspection: March and April 2004
School's unique reference number: 111257
Headteacher: Mrs G D Moores
Inspector's name and number: Mrs K Leighton 547

School context

The school is much smaller than average although pupil numbers have risen since the last inspection. This is because Smallwood is popular not only in the village in which it is situated but also attracting children from the further away. Most pupils are of white British heritage. Very few children are eligible for a free school meal and a higher than average proportion of them have learning and/or disabilities. The head teacher and assistant head teacher have both been in post for less than a year.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Smallwood as a Church of England school are outstanding

The warm and caring family atmosphere reflects this school's Christian values. Everyone is made to feel highly valued. This positive attitude impacts directly upon the teaching, learning and ultimately the achievement of its children.

Established strengths

- The outstanding Christian ethos, which clearly impacts on the attitude and values of the children.
- Dedicated and supportive governors and parents.
- An inclusive and nurturing learning environment promoting spiritual, moral and cultural growth.

Focus for development

- To formally record the monitoring and evaluation of Smallwood as a church school which will firmly embed it into the school's self-improvement and development plan.

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

The children are very clear about the fact that they attend a church school and how that makes it special. Parents are also fully aware of the Christian character of the school and appreciate the impact it has upon the development of their children. They particularly point to the outstanding confidence and a feeling of self worth, which stay with the children even after they leave. Pupils say they feel safe and happy and that their beliefs and values are respected. The schools inclusive approach is a great strength; children and their parents are confident that everyone will be given the help they need to grow spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. It is abundantly clear that there are very good relationships at all levels. Staff, children, parents and governors have a strong sense of responsibility and care towards each other giving the ethos of a large Christian family. Children say that there is a wonderful feeling of well-being because they all know one another and are friends that 'if you are alone someone will always come because we all stick together'. A new child readily confirmed that

this is an accurate reflection. Relationships with the community are very strong and ensure that all pupils develop and understanding of their place within it. Care is taken to ensure that pupils of faiths other than Christianity are also fully included in this distinctively Christian community. The children are actively involved in supporting many charities, being very aware of the needs of others. The environment enhances the feeling of family with wonderful photographic displays using the smiling faces of children outside their classrooms and photographs of all the children as babies in the entrance area. The artwork reflects the Christian character in a display using the church building as a focus. The ichthys shape sandblasted onto the glass of the new corridor is a strong reminder of the wonderful spirituality within the school as well as its Christian foundation and character.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is very important and an integral part of the life of the school. The new leadership team have worked extremely hard to develop a robust system of planning and recording collective worship. All teaching staff regularly leads worship and confidently subscribe to the Christian ethos. They use creative ways to engage the children in worship and the teaching of a broad spectrum of Anglican beliefs and traditions. Children say they enjoy worship and can readily recall their favourites. 'Big buddies' escort 'little buddies' into daily worship and caringly support them throughout. The worship time is therefore respected and made special by lighting candles to create an atmosphere of reverence and reflection. Only when the candles are extinguished are notices given out. Their enthusiasm is shown in their wonderful singing of an excellent choice of lively hymns. The outstanding attention to detail in the format and content of worship ensures that everyone is able to gain a degree of spiritual growth or affirmation no matter what age, stage of belief or faith. Assemblies are used to celebrate achievement when awards such as Citizen of the month and Star of the month are distributed. Photographs are taken of the winners and displayed in the hall affirming pupil's sense of achievement and value. Governors and parents are particularly appreciative of the quiet area in each classroom for the children to reflect and pray in addition to those prayers said before lunch and at the end of the school day. Monthly church services are very popular because they involve the school and are often totally planned and led by the children. Parents are made very welcome at worship and this involvement in school life has increased the number of parents and past pupils attending church regularly.

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

The school has continued to develop the church links under its new leadership. The recommendation to continue to provide Christian values of the highest quality found in the last inspection report has certainly been achieved. The Rector and foundation governors are most enthusiastic about the school and give a great deal of support to the head teacher and staff spiritually as well as in the highly effective running of the school. The head teacher, supported by the management team and governors, has worked out a clear and well articulated vision of what it means to be a Church of England school. This vision has been achieved by lengthy discussion between all school staff, governors, parents and children. It is promoted in all school policies and the prospectus and means that Christianity and its values permeate all aspects of school life. The school seeks the views of the children through the school's council, Eco warriors, buddies, questionnaires and a suggestion box. Parents are also consulted by questionnaire and informally at regular school meetings and events. Both parents and children say they are completely confident that their views are valued and acted upon. Staff and governors are fully involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the school. Action points for development are regularly discussed at staff and governors meetings. However time limited written plans showing actions to be taken have not been created.