

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Upton Heath Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Upton Lane
Upton Heath
Upton – by – Chester
Chester
Cheshire
CH2 1ED

Diocese: Chester

Local authority: Chester
Dates of inspection: 5th February, 2007
Date of last inspection: March, 2001
School's unique reference number: 131684
Headteacher: Claire Lyons
Inspector's name and number: Georgina Lewis 401

School context

Upton Heath Church of England Primary School is a larger than average primary school of 420 pupils. It was created in 1998 by the amalgamation of St Mary's Infant school and Upton Manor Junior school. The area, which includes Dane Army Barracks, is one of social advantage. There are few children eligible for free school meals. The Head teacher has been in post since September 2006.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Upton Heath Church of England Primary school as a Church of England school are good.

The respect all pupils and adults have for each other is a positive illustration of the Christian ethos of this school. The school enjoys a very good reputation within its community as a result of the education pupils receive, and the pupils' involvement in many aspects of village life. The behaviour of the pupils is exceptional; showing their care for others in many ways. They work co-operatively and are courteous and polite. Pupils speak very positively about their school and the teachers.

Established strengths

- The clear vision and commitment of the Head teacher and governors in promoting the school's Christian ethos
- The commitment of the Head teacher and Co-ordinator for RE and Collective Worship to further develop Collective Worship
- The outstanding contribution which pupils' artwork makes to their spiritual development.

Focus for development

- Extend further the involvement of pupils in evaluating Acts of Collective Worship
- Develop more consistency in classroom displays associated with the school's Christian ethos
- The use of prayer at Governors' meetings.

Upton Heath Church of England Primary school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good at meeting the needs of all its learners.

The Christian commitment shown by the Head teacher and governors ensures that the school's Christian ethos is foremost in their vision and their planning. All pupils' needs are well met through the support provided. The behaviour of pupils is exceptionally good. There is a quiet, calm atmosphere in this large school. There are impressive records of the many ways in which pupils are involved in their local and wider communities. Their charity fundraising, the strong links with Dorin Park Special school and a local residential home are

impressive. The school choir performs regularly at a variety of venues and has been involved in fund-raising within the community. The inclusive nature of the school is clearly demonstrated in the outstanding displays of art. The artist in residence gives pupils the opportunity to be involved in wide variety of artwork. The 'awe and wonder' aspect of the artwork contributes to the pupils' spiritual development. They enjoy doing the work and say that it 'brightens up the school'. Pupils are actively encouraged to participate whatever their ability and all make contributions to the work displayed. A main focal point is the display, at the entrance to the school, which links together a study of the local parish church and the design of an arch. Many of the classrooms have a cross and prayers displayed and areas, which focus on RE themes, but this is not consistent. The school's association with Shomang school in Soweto has provided pupils with a valuable cultural experience and an opportunity to provide practical support. The visit of the Head and teachers from Soweto ensured pupils have first hand knowledge of the different experiences children have at Shomang school, as well as providing opportunities to develop African music and art.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective Worship is planned and organised thematically; the seasons of the Anglican Church are followed. The Collective Worship co-ordinator and Head teacher have a clear vision for future development, which has already begun in practice. Teachers are more involved and training is being arranged to improve their skills and confidence. Pupils' views are sought to evaluate the impact of worship and are being used to inform further development. Pupils are enthusiastic volunteers in Collective Worship. Two Acts of Collective Worship were seen; the use of the cross and lighted candle created an appropriate setting for worship. The Key stage 2 Worship, enthusiastically led by the vicar, engaged the pupils, they were attentive, showed their enjoyment and participated well in the activity. The theme of 'working together' was reinforced with a short Bible reading and prayer. In the Key stage 1 Worship, pupils actively demonstrated how 'working together' gets results. Their singing was enthusiastic and tuneful, and their anticipation of the outcomes during the activity was very perceptive. The positive impact of worship is seen in the pupils' exceptionally good behaviour and attitudes to each other. They work together co-operatively, giving support to their peers. The recent Ofsted inspection states that 'spiritual development is excellent'. Pupils say grace before the lunch time meal and prayers at the end of each day. A variety of opportunities is provided for parents to participate in worship

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

The relationship between the Head teacher and governors is one which is firmly based on their mutual faith; the Christian ethos of the school is at the centre of the school's educational provision. There is a clear vision and governors play an active management role within the school. The Head teacher's reports to the Governing body provide a good basis for discussion as well providing information. There are regular, minuted meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body. Links with the local parish church are well developed. The vicar is a regular visitor to school and is developing further links between the church and school. Foundation governors and other members of the Governing Body are church members who actively support the school. At present the Governing Body does not have prayers at its meetings, which has been of concern to some of the Christian members. The school has good curriculum provision, which is enhanced by the many extra curricular activities provide; a range of visits and visitors extends pupils' experiences. Staff are valued and respected; pupils are given responsibility and their achievement celebrated. The School Council manages fund raising and the Buddy system allows Year 6 pupils to work with younger pupils at play and lunch times. Pupils visit a Christian residential centre and share their experiences at a 'celebration assembly'.