

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Waverley Abbey Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Tilford

Farnham

GU10 2AE

**Diocese: Guildford**

Local authority: Surrey

Dates of inspection: Friday, May 11<sup>th</sup> 2007

Date of last inspection: June 2001

School's unique reference number: 125232

Headteacher: Mr D Jeffs

Inspector's name and number: Mr Andrew Rickett (NSI 201)

#### **School context**

Waverley Abbey School is larger than the national average. Pupils come from a variety of infant feeder schools across a wide rural area. Housing in the catchment area is very expensive. Most of the children are of white British heritage. The number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly in line with the national average. The school has been oversubscribed for the last six years.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Waverley Abbey as a Church of England school are outstanding**

Waverley Abbey, Church of England Voluntary Aided, Junior School is an outstanding church school. It has a very strong commitment to its Christian character and continually challenges itself to find ways that this can be enhanced. This has created a Christian community which places great emphasis on each individual as a special and unique being.

#### **Established strengths**

- The very high quality of provision for pupil's personal development.
- Collective worship that is an integral part of the whole school community.
- The very successful way in which the school has become an inclusive community.

#### **Focus for development**

- Improve the role of governors in monitoring and evaluating collective worship.
- Develop assessment procedures to track pupil's progress in RE across the school.
- Encourage dialogue amongst all members of the school community to promote the school's distinctive character.

#### **The school is outstanding at meetings the needs of all learners through its Christian character.**

The inspiring quality of Waverley Abbey is that pupils possess a natural courtesy which is motivated not because of a particular behaviour policy, but because of a deep understanding that Christian values are a way of life. This permeates throughout the school and can be seen in the very high quality of relationships which exist between all members of the school community. The school encourages pupils to explore their feelings and emotions in order to develop self awareness and an appreciation of how others are feeling. Pupils know they can trust both their teachers and their peers and are confident that their views and opinions will be listened to with respect. This trust is repaid in the freedom that pupils are given to make choices in their own lives. Pupils speak of the importance of understanding each other and recognise how this can help create an environment in which everyone is valued. In particular the school has successfully created a community in which pupils of all faiths feel very comfortable to express their personal beliefs within an inclusive ethos. This was seen many times in the school day both in lessons and around the school. For example, pupils acted with great sensitivity when one of their friends became upset and there was a heartfelt desire to

offer support. Attitudes towards work are very good and pupils of all abilities make excellent progress in their learning. Attainment and progress are high and pupils speak with confidence about their future. The school is justly proud of this, but staff and governors recognise that it is only possible because of the secure environment that has been created in this community. The beautiful surroundings are appreciated by the pupils who show great care in looking after and finding ways to enhance the outside environment.

### **The impact of collective worship is outstanding.**

Worship at Waverley Abbey is a time when the whole school comes together to celebrate with great joy. It is a vital part of school life because it is through this that the school's central message is delivered; that everyone has a unique worth. Worship captures the pupils' imaginations and engages them through a wide variety of ways. There are moments of profound understanding, for example one young pupil on being asked for similarities between a banana and a human, replied most wonderfully that a banana may have a thick skin but the inside is what truly matters. There was a tangible sense of awe at what this small child had said. When the main themes are followed up in the more intimate setting of class worship, this can result in some extremely powerful moments, with the pupils using rich language to describe their reactions to complex issues and beliefs. They are very enthusiastic about worship and eager to take up the many opportunities for participation which they are given. Time is given for quiet reflection and pupils bow their heads as they listen to prayers. Candles are lit and pupils understand that this shows that it is a special time and that God is present. Prayers are used throughout the school day as a time for reflection and this opportunity is highly valued. The vicar leads worship regularly and follows the theme for the week. On special occasions the school will hold its worship in the local church. Worship is recognisably Anglican in its content with familiar prayers and songs of praise which pupils sing with enthusiasm.

The school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship.

### **The effect of religious education is good.**

The quality of teaching and learning is very good. In these lessons pupils are given many opportunities to discuss their beliefs and to explore those of other faiths. They respond very well because they know that their views will be listened to with respect by the teachers and their peers. In one lesson, pupils were asked to consider how hard it is to keep promises. They were sufficiently at ease to relate how it feels to break promises and consider the effect it has on others. This is an example of how teachers use the pupils' own experience and then tie it in to the RE syllabus. In this case it referred to Baptismal vows and gave pupils an insight into the fact that they are made for life. Good lessons are delivered at a fast pace using a variety of teaching and learning strategies which keep the pupils engaged. Pupils are encouraged to talk with each other and are shown how to listen carefully to the views of someone else. Attitudes are very good because pupils understand how important RE is in giving them the opportunity to learn about other people and questions of faith. The level of challenge is high and pupils therefore progress very well and achieve good standards. The assessment of individual pupils is good and tracking their progress across the school will strengthen the school's ability to accurately assess achievement. At Waverley School, RE provides opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual dimension through the careful exploration of emotions and feelings.

The school meets the statutory requirement for religious education.

### **The leadership and management of the school as a church school are good with significant outstanding features.**

The Headteacher embodies the Christian message of the school. As parents say, "the unconditional acceptance of each other is the central message which is modelled by the Headteacher." He is committed to constantly looking at ways to enhance the school's Christian character so that it has an effect on everyone in the school community. Together with an outstanding RE Co-ordinator, they have succeeded in making a very significant impact on the spiritual lives of all those who experience the Christian love that is at the heart

of the school. The RE Co-ordinator has a real passion for her subject and this is having a marked effect on the ethos of the school. The governors are similarly committed to promoting the school's religious character and have a good grasp of the issues that are needed to take it forward. For example, they recognise the need to put in place more formal procedures to monitor collective worship. The school maintains good links with the local church despite some disadvantages in the practicalities of doing so. The Incumbent is a familiar figure in school and is totally committed to strengthening the ties between the church and school communities. Parents are extremely supportive of the school and realise that its Christian character offers something special. They say that exposure to faith gives their children a sense of there being something beyond the everyday, that will last with them forever. The development of this spiritual dimension is regarded by parents as being of vital importance in the growth of their children.

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