

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Welford Sibbertoft and Sulby Church of England Voluntary Aided Endowed School**

West Street  
Welford  
Northants  
NN6 6HU

#### **Diocese: Peterborough**

Local authority: Northamptonshire  
Dates of inspection: 11 September 2007  
Date of last inspection: 11 – 17 January 2002  
School's unique reference number: 121997  
Headteacher: Mrs Michelle Pye  
Inspector's name and number: Douglas Spenceley 368

#### **School context**

Welford Sibbertoft and Sulby Endowed School is a small village school set in rural Northamptonshire. Few children are from ethnic backgrounds other than white British and none are economically disadvantaged. The head teacher has been in post for one year and there has been a high turnover of staff and governors in recent years.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Welford Sibbertoft and Sulby Endowed School as a Church of England school are satisfactory**

Christian values implicitly underpin the ethos of the school and the new head teacher and foundation governors are aware of the need to make the Christian ethos of the school more overt and distinctive. There is the potential to develop further the effectiveness of the school as an Anglican school.

#### **Established strengths**

- This is a happy school with a caring ethos underpinned by implicit Christian values
- Close links exist between the school, community and local church
- The head teacher provides caring leadership for the school community based on Christian values
- Governors, parents and staff provide strong support for the recently appointed head teacher

#### **Focus for development**

- Develop a clear vision of what it means to be a school with a Church of England foundation and how this links into policy and practice for the development of pupils' spiritual and moral development
- Formalise the policy and procedure for monitoring and evaluating collective worship

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

A large majority of pupils are happy at school and feel valued, special and safe. They behave in a caring and supportive way towards each other and operate a formalised system of 'Friend Stop' and 'Friendly Faces' to help with pupils who may feel left out or lonely at play times. There is a friendly purposeful atmosphere. Pupils have contributed to the writing of classroom rules; they understand why they are needed and think they are fair. Pupils are enthusiastic about the link established last year with a school in the Gambia. Children have shown that they are developing an understanding of a culture very different from their own. There are plans to develop this link further. Religious Education has a positive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; they contributed with a satisfactory

level of understanding to discussions in lessons observed. For example, in one RE lesson observed, pupils related teaching about Moses and the Ten Commandments to the school rules that they had recently worked on, talked about why rules were necessary and were able to develop this into a wider moral and social context. It is difficult, however, to gauge how much of an impact the Christian foundation of the school has on pupils' spiritual and moral growth as there is little documented evidence of how Christian values and teaching underpin the school's character and environment. There is little evidence of symbolism, signs or displays which support the Christian foundation of the school.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory**

Pupils enjoyed the act of worship observed taken by the priest-in-charge of the local church as part of its weekly involvement in school worship. Many pupils could recall both the main points and the implications for their own spiritual development. Pupils were respectful during the worship and on entry and departure, and joined in the Lord's Prayer appropriately. The topic and approach used was varied and took into account the wide range of abilities, spirituality and ages of the pupils. The pupils readily volunteered when asked and answered questions well. Pupils interviewed during the course of the day were able to discuss appropriately why the cross, Bible, candle and prayer of invitation were present on the worship table in the Hall. The school's policy follows legal requirements and is in accordance with the school's trust deed. Acts of worship on other days are varied and broadly Christian, with an appropriate balance between 'worship' and 'assembly'. However, themes for acts of worship have not yet been fully planned for the coming year and there is no formal, consistent monitoring and evaluation of the acts of worship in place to inform future planning. Whilst a recent survey has shown that the majority of pupils speak positively about collective worship, a significant minority from the older pupils of the school found worship less inspiring and fulfilling. Changes in style and content are being implemented to remedy this. The school attends church for major festivals. These services contain a strong Anglican influence in style and content and pupils speak positively about their involvement in the services. Parents speak in a complimentary way about these services, which are well attended by both parents and others from the community.

### **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is satisfactory**

It is evident from discussion with parents, a foundation governor, the head teacher, local clergy and from observation of activities and attitudes in school that there is an underlying assumption of Christian values and expectations in the life of the school. However, the Christian nature of the school is not overtly expressed in documentation or development planning. Conversations with a governor and the head teacher assume a Christian ethos as a starting point for discussion. The recently appointed head teacher has strong leadership skills. She has the support of the governors and parents speak well of her caring and attentive nature. Since her appointment, there has been a series of initiatives which are still in progress, particularly focusing on tracking, evaluating and monitoring. Collective Worship is monitored informally by the governors and they are aware of the need to set up more formal systems. The school development plan was deliberately short-term and is to be rewritten in the coming year to include a focus on evaluating how effective and distinctive the school is as a Church of England school. The school is a valued and integral part of the local and worshipping community. The school is supportive of the local community, with regular contributions to the 'Welford Bugle', and acts as a host venue for a number of community events. These are well received by the local community. The school contributes regularly to the church magazine and many children enjoy being in the choir at church. Parents have commented about how they valued the church giving Bibles to last year's leavers during the leavers' service in church in July. The Toolkit contained a thoughtful and honest evaluation of the school as a church foundation. Judgements are a little generous, but there is clear evidence from discussion that the leadership and management of the school have the potential to develop positively in this area.