

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Westcott First Church of England Voluntary Aided School**

High Street

Westcott

Aylesbury

HP18 0PH

LEA: Bucks

Dates of inspection: 12 September 2007

Date of last inspection: 4/5 November 2002

School's Unique reference number: 110442

Name of Headteacher: Mrs Julie Hickey

Inspector's name and NS inspector's number: Mrs Judith Babb 139

### **Context**

Westcott First School is a very small school. It nestles beside the church in a rural 'dormitory' village with few amenities. The majority of pupils are White British; three families have one or both parents from mainland Europe. The head teacher has been in post for two terms.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Westcott First School as a Church of England school are good.**

The distinct family atmosphere, underpinned by great care for all pupils, is the hallmark of the school. Following the appointment of the new head teacher, the school has begun the self-evaluation process well. There is a commitment amongst the team of governors, staff, and parents to develop the school to its full potential for church school education in the twenty-first century.

### **Established strengths**

- Happy pupils with high self-esteem
- A team minister, head teacher, staff, parents, and governors, who are committed to working together for the good of the pupils
- A well-developed interior and a very attractive outdoor environment
- Very good moral, social and cultural development of pupils

### **Focus for development**

The school should now:

- Review all aspects of Collective Worship, and then set up a planning, monitoring, and evaluation group with wide membership
- Raise its profile as a church school, especially through visual communication (the school badge, signage, etc)
- Forge closer links with the PCC, the parents, and other village groups, to place it at the heart of the village

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

A family atmosphere is felt throughout the school, with pupils from the youngest to oldest knowing the names of all their peers. Pupils are proud of the building's unusual features (e.g. the museum room), and of the high standards of cleanliness and bright display. The staff, both teaching and support, share one room, all regularly discussing the welfare of pupils. Christian values (e.g. tolerance, loving-kindness) are evident in the way pupils and staff live amicably in a small building. Parents share this view, saying that they feel their children are safe, and that 'everybody looks out for everyone else'. They feel that the

pupils have 'taken the new head to their hearts'. An imaginative curriculum, with a strong emphasis on creativity, keeps all pupils on task in lessons. They listen well for their age, and they have many opportunities to express their opinions and feelings. Pupils with special needs, including Gifted and Talented, are nurtured and accepted by peers and staff alike. Their social and cultural development is excellent. Moral development, encouraged by very good Religious Education lessons, is a strong feature. Spiritual development, seen particularly in pupils' response to their most imaginative grounds, is good. Visitors and visits, augmented by an interesting programme of extra-curricular activities, make this school an exciting place for all pupils.

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

Acts of worship in the school hall are sometimes attended by all staff on site, and they are led by the head teacher, the co-ordinator, or the team minister. The part-time music teacher leads one assembly per week. Candles are lit by a member of staff; pupils help with the music for entry. There are several other visual cues in front of the pupils, and they say they find this a little confusing. Pupils enter silently, though some staff instructions are intrusive to the reverent atmosphere. Although observed at the beginning of a new school year, pupils sing most confidently. They can keep silence ('listen time') when the leader tells them, and they can repeat most of The Lord's Prayer with understanding. There is a school Creed that is sometimes said in hall assemblies. Moral lessons from the leader are quickly understood, and can be applied very well later in the day. Recall of stories heard in class assembly, led by the head teacher or the co-ordinator, is satisfactory to good. Parents say that they are invited to Worship in the church. Governors visit from time to time, though a foundation governor has not been assigned to monitor and evaluate all Acts of Worship. The impact of Worship on the school is not mentioned in the prospectus, and the policy is overdue for review. The co-ordinator for Collective Worship is a longstanding half-time teacher, who has willingly undertaken training. Her timetable, however, limits her ability to assess the impact of Worship fully. Commendably, formal observation of Acts of Worship by staff has begun, though this is not yet embedded. Overall, self-evaluation of Acts of Worship by the school is a little generous. In response to the last S23 inspection, a simple record of Acts of Worship is kept. The co-ordinator now chooses appropriate themes for each week's assemblies. The team minister is told of these to inform her planning, and this has helped pupils to have a sense of continuity.

**The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is good.**

The team minister is a regular visitor to the school to lead Worship or to give pastoral support. She has chosen to be one of two foundation governors; the other foundation governor is the Special Needs, and Child Protection, governor. Governing body meetings open with prayer, and the church prayed for the new head teacher when she re-located. The link with the church is established and growing because a member of the school staff has recently joined the PCC. Pupils have been invited to a 'light party' organised by the church at Hallowe'en. There are good links with the diocese through the adviser's visits. A member of the governing body makes a monitoring visit to the school each term, including attending the Act of Worship. The new head teacher is aware that this is infrequent and informal. She articulates a Christian vision for the school of a tight-knit community embracing the village. Currently, the school logo and headed notepaper are being re-designed to reflect the ethos more adequately. The Christian aspects of the school are woven into the current plans for the school's development (for instance, making a mosaic of Bible stories, and linking with other churches in the locality). Pupils and parents feel involved by responding to questionnaires. Parents share the vision for a strong and inclusive school, and they support its work with a successful parents' group.