

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Wickford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School,**

Mount Road,

Wickford

SS11 8HE

**Diocese: Chelmsford**

LA: Essex

Dates of inspection: 27<sup>th</sup> June 2008

Date of last inspection: 2002

School's Unique reference number: 115089

Name of Headteacher: Mrs Debbie Rogan

Inspector's name and NS number: Mrs Rosemary Privett 321

#### **Context of the school**

Wickford is a small Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infants school. The school buildings are a mix of old and new, the original Victorian building having been sensitively extended to provide accommodation which is spacious and attractive. The school serves an area which has been identified as one of considerable social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is well below average and very few pupils come from minority ethnic groups or have English as a second language.

#### **The school's distinctiveness and effectiveness as a church school are outstanding.**

The school is very well led and managed by a committed Headteacher who is ably supported by an equally committed staff and governing body. The whole school share a common vision and is committed to upholding the very strong Christian ethos which underpins all aspects of school life. All members of the school community feel valued, and relationships are based on mutual trust and respect. Parents speak very highly of the school.

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#### **Established strengths**

- The Christian Mission Statement which permeates the life of the whole school community
- The exemplary behaviour and attitudes of the pupils and the many opportunities they have to take responsibility and make a positive contribution.
- The visionary leadership of the Headteacher and strong sense of teamwork which recognises and develops the strengths of all.
- The outstanding opportunities for spiritual development
- The strong and very effective partnerships which exist between the school, the governors, the church and the local community.

#### **Focus for development**

- Give consideration to how the children can be involved in the further development of the visual focus used during the worship time.

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

Wickford Infants, is a kind, caring and very happy community. The explicit Christian values in its Mission Statement – HEARTS - are understood and lived out by the pupils and have a very positive impact on their attitudes and behaviour. The school is committed to developing the whole child and a wide variety of initiatives are in place which enable the children to understand what it means to be healthy, feel safe and be valued and supported. The school's use of 'Talk Time' is outstanding and is a way in which pupils' views on a variety of issues are heard and valued. During Talk Time, pupils speak of how they learn how to be good friends, and of the kindness of adults in school. Topics linked with the spiritual life of the school are included as Talk Time themes and have led to positive changes in the schools arrangements for assembly and the use of Holy Space. The school also encourages reflection and spiritual development through a creative use of the school buildings. Beautiful wall displays, and recent additions, such as the colourful stained glass windows in the Library and panels in the Foundation Stage classroom, provide the children with high quality images as a focus for reflection and discussion. Christian symbols and the Lord's Prayer, displayed in the classrooms help provide further visible confirmation that Christian values are fundamental to the school. High quality teaching in RE and the use of exciting and interactive approaches, mean that pupils enjoy the subject, achieve well and, ensure that RE makes a very positive contribution to the Spiritual Moral and Cultural development of the pupils. 1

**The impact of worship on the whole school community is outstanding.**

The impact of worship can be seen in the views and attitudes of pupils and in the way that it permeates school life. Well planned assemblies have a place of major importance within the life of the school and follow weekly themes which help the children develop, spiritually, morally and culturally. During the worship time, the central position of the cross, the singing of hymns and the saying of prayers, helps the school to develop its Christian character. Children have many opportunities to participate in the assemblies and regularly write and lead prayers during the worship time. Due to the very young age of the children (half the school are 4+ or 5,) the school works hard to find creative ways of celebrating its spirituality, like letting of balloons on Ascension day. Prayer is encouraged and is an important feature of the school day. Prayers are said at lunchtime and at the end of the school day and children were able to explain its purpose. Prayer requests from the school's prayer board are offered during worship time, enabling the school to pray on behalf of the wider community. Special events in the life of the school are also celebrated with prayer. The weekly achievement assembly is a very tangible demonstration of the school's 'HEARTS' values as well as an opportunity for the whole school to share the children's achievements with parents and the wider community. The children said that this time was really important to them as it was fun and made them feel special. 1

**The quality of leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding.**

The Headteacher has a strong personal vision for the school which is shared by staff and governors and appropriately reflects its Christian foundation. She leads the school with energy and commitment, ably supported by a very effective deputy Headteacher, staff team and governing body. A very strong sense of teamwork exists amongst the whole staff. The school's Christian distinctiveness is promoted well through its documentation and whole school initiatives such as the use of Holy Space, Talk Time and the regular involvement of local clergy. High quality wall displays also help to highlight the schools Christian foundation. The governing body know the school well and offers the Headteacher effective challenge and support. Some very effective systems are in place, which enable the school to make accurate judgements of its effectiveness as a Church School. Twice yearly retreat days allow

the whole staff to reflect together and identify priorities for improvement .These days, along with other effective self evaluation procedures, ensure that there are purposeful and realistic plans in place for the school's future development .This enables the governors and staff to make a real difference. The strong leadership of the Headteacher has meant that the established links between the school, the church and the community have continued to grow and develop. Local clergy have a vital part to play in the life of the school and provide much valued pastoral and spiritual support. Many parents said that they valued the school's openness, mentioning, in particular the many opportunities offered to them, to share in the ongoing life of the school. They spoke positively of the ways in which the school seeks and values their views on a variety of issues. **1**

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