

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Witley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School**

Church Lane

Witley

Godalming

GU8 5PN

**Diocese: Guildford**

Local authority: Surrey

Dates of inspection: 17 January 2007

Date of last inspection: October 2002

School's unique reference number: 125159

Headteacher: Mrs J Storey

Inspector's name and number: Mrs J Babb (NSI: 139)

#### **School context**

Witley CE Infant School is smaller than average. It is situated at the heart of the village, opposite the church. Nearly all pupils are White British, from the village and the surrounding area. Recent major building work has enhanced the accommodation with a classroom, and a multi-purpose hall shared with the community.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Witley as a Church of England school are good**

Witley CE Infant School is a good church school. There is a distinctive Christian ethos, with effective policies and practices that uphold the spirit of its Trust Deed.

#### **Established strengths**

- A distinctive Christian ethos based upon Gospel values
- Excellent relationships and team-working practices involving pupils, staff, governors, parents, and members of the church community
- Confident pupils, whose moral, social, and cultural development is outstanding
- Imaginative and careful management of a difficult site

#### **Focus for development**

- Establish a Worship planning, monitoring, and evaluation group led by the foundation governors
- Make a clear distinction between the roles of Worship Co-ordinator and the subject leader for Religious Education to clarify the contribution each will make to the spiritual development of pupils

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

The school believes that personal and social education is very important. This is evident in its imaginative extra-curricular events, in the 'friendship stop' for play-time, and in the effective measures taken against bullying (pupil interviews: 'we know what to do – we tell!'). There is a link governor for spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, and the programme is monitored. Pupils, most of whom are very articulate, are mindful of the needs of others, and fully aware of their place in the world. Spiritual development is good ('when we close our eyes I talk to God; He listens') and this aspect has shown progress since the last inspection. Pupils want to do well because they are rewarded with praise and celebration (special assemblies). Those from minority groups, both religious and social, are fully integrated, and this affects the moral development of others (e.g. courteously drawing a reticent pupil into discussion). The school council develops individual responsibility for actions. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. Parents express appreciation of their 'freedom to pop in'. Pupils with short- or long-term special needs are assigned teaching assistants. Display of pupils' work is

attractive. Creative use of the school environment underlines the commitment to a safe, welcoming place for all (lift, quiet corners, security doors, etc).

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

Pupils gather for Worship at one end of the hall to give a feeling of community. They walk in very quietly, and show that this is a special time by sitting still. Calming music is played for entry, though the exit is noisy ('the best class first'). Staff sit supportively around the pupils, and then join in the activity. Stories are told well, so pupils remember them from week to week. This is especially true for the Reader from the church. Both staff and pupils appreciate her contribution, shown by her inclusion in the planning process, and by constant reference to her when pupils talk about Worship. A good focal point is created by a table with a cross at child's eye level. Candles are lit before the Act of Worship. Their significance is not as clear as is possible because they are not extinguished to signify an end to Worship. Pupils are given ample opportunity to reflect quietly, and they respond appropriately. The leader prompts their thoughts sensitively ('Is there something inside me that I could share?'). Although not used every day, most pupils can say 'The Lord's Prayer'. A small repertoire of songs and hymns (with 'signing') is sung enthusiastically, contributing to the pupils' enjoyment. Celebration assemblies, and major festival services held in the church, are very popular with parents. Governors also attend Acts of Worship, and reports are made to the governing body. Commendably, the views of pupils on the format of 'assembly' have been sought and acted upon.

The school meets the statutory requirement for a daily collective act of worship.

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

Three foundation governors ensure that there are active links between the school and the church, including providing leavers with a Bible. One foundation governor, the Archdeacon's nominee because the Vicar is part-time, is also a pro-active link-governor for Religious Education. The Reader leads Worship regularly, and the Vicar makes pastoral visits. They are all welcome at the school, giving the pupils a strong sense of community. Since the last inspection, there are articles from the school in church publications, and vice versa. The headteacher and staff are openly appreciative of these bonds, and this is reflected by the pupils (in friendly greetings to 'church' visitors). Collective Worship has no link governor, but a report is written when a governor visits. Full governing body meetings, but not sub-committees, open with prayer, and pupils pray before lunch. The headteacher takes the lead in fostering good community relationships (school Christmas cards; invitations to neighbours; joint use of the hall; links with other schools), and in seeking opinion from stakeholders. School development planning has only brief reference to foundation governor responsibilities. The prospectus, policies and practices promote the Christian foundation, so that pupils say confidently (cf. interviews) that the simple cross and W.I.T.L.E.Y acrostic at the entrance reflect what happens in school.