

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Weston-on-Trent Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Forrester Road
Weston-on-Trent
Derby DE72 2HX

Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Derby

Local authority: Derbyshire

Date of inspection: 28 April 2016

Date of last inspection: May 2011

School's unique reference number: 112890

Headteacher: Ben O'Connell

Inspector's name and number: Kerry Palmer (60)

School context

Weston-on-Trent is a much smaller than average, but expanding rural village school. A significant number of admissions are from outside the village, attracted by the school's high standing in the community. Almost all children are of White British heritage. There is little social deprivation; the proportion of children receiving additional support from pupil premium funding is below average. Levels of special need are about average. A splendid modern building with spacious outdoor facilities provides an excellent environment for 21st century education. The headteacher has been in post for less than two years. St Mary's Parish Church is a healthy walk away.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Weston-on-Trent Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- School leaders, driven by Christian values, to provide the best possible education for each individual child resulting in enthusiasm for learning, a safe, happy environment and high levels of achievement.
- Cultivating the God given potential of children and adults alike through a rich curriculum and staff development opportunities achieving growth in self-esteem, confidence and abilities.
- Strong Christian ethos, central to collective worship, fostered by religious education (RE) and nurtured throughout the school, evident in a real sense of koinonia, Christian community.

Areas to improve

- Review the Christian basis of the school's values, aims and key policies to ensure that all stakeholders appreciate and can articulate the centrality of the teaching and example

of Jesus to the school's Christian character.

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

Weston-on-Trent succeeds in its central aim to support and strengthen the school's Christian vision, ethos and values. These are proudly espoused and at the heart of every aspect of school life. They sustain and positively promote the spiritual, moral, cultural and intellectual growth of each child, recognising the God given gifts of each individual. Conscious effort has been put into ensuring a broad and rich curriculum, including instrumental music opportunities for all, multi-sports and Forest School. Rooted in Christian values such as creation and endurance, these engage and enthuse children of all abilities and learning styles, promoting self-esteem and the confidence to 'have a go'. All children make very good progress, including the small group identified as disadvantaged, whose needs are well supported. Consequently, children love school, behaviour is exemplary and attendance continues to improve at levels above national averages. The application of Christian values, modelled by all staff working in a cooperative and committed professional team, impact powerfully on the children who work hard, are supportive of each other and say they are happy and feel safe. Great strides are made in 'Achieving true potential for all', children and adults alike. Increased opportunities, since the last inspection, to learn about other faiths, including input from parents of other faiths and visits to other faiths places of worship, have deepened understanding and respect. Support for a range of charities, chosen and promoted by the active School Council, encourages empathy for the needs of the less fortunate, locally, nationally and globally.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is approached with reverence and humility. It is recognised by all as central to school life and promotes Christian action in children's and adult's lives. Children say the focus on Bible stories, the example of Jesus and reflection time helps them at school and home. Year 6 children proudly spoke about the new outdoor reflection area that they have recently developed with the teaching assistants and read prayers they had written to enhance its impact. Prayer is an established feature of school life with children's prayers regularly shared through prayer trees, prayer walks and class reflection areas. Spiritual development is strong. The school recently produced a video on The Lord's Prayer providing much 'food for thought'. Children have a growing understanding of key concepts such as God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, supported by the regular use of the 'Grace'. However, the theological centrality of the teaching and example of Jesus to Christian values is not fully articulated and children's awareness of Christianity as a world-wide faith is limited. The long-term worship plan is set within a liturgical framework with themes, focussing on Christian values and church festivals. Besides Christmas and Easter, these include 'Love life, live Lent,' which focused on spreading acts of kindness, and a whole week of class organised worship during Pentecost. Throughout the year, daily, whole school worship is delivered by all staff in turn, including teaching assistants. It gives many opportunities for children to actively participate, such as a whole class presenting the creation story with actions and singing 'You are an Inspiration'. Worship often includes interactive group activities where older children work alongside younger ones promoting the school's family atmosphere. Evaluation from children, staff discussion and governor monitoring contribute to focused development planning. Termly Christian values are embedded through class reflective areas, newsletters to parents and activity sheets, so rooting them in the life of the school. There is regular input from the rector, who also has a significant pastoral role in the school. This, along with 'Church in School' services which include families and the parish community and festival services in St Mary's Church, all grow children's understanding of Anglican tradition and appreciation of the place of the church in the community. The Methodist minister is a friend of the school and ecumenical partner.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE is taught creatively with a range of imaginative strategies that engage children

enthusiastically in higher order learning. Outcomes, over time, indicate that teaching and learning is excellent. The introduction of structured pupil tracking, skills ladders, regular book scrutiny and pupil progress meetings succeed in ensuring that progress and achievement is in line with other core subjects. There is a strong focus on deepening knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. Throughout the RE curriculum children enjoy the challenge of reflecting on 'Big Questions' which promote thinking deeply about their personal response to a range of issues. 'What do we mean by Son of God?' one class pondered. The passionate subject leader takes every opportunity to further develop her expertise through visits to schools where practice is recognised as outstanding and effective use of diocesan training and networking opportunities. Application for the national RE Quality Mark being indicative of the school's commitment to the importance of the subject. She has a clear picture of progression and consistency throughout the school and successfully promotes staff development, high quality teaching and the centrality of RE to school life. Children retain much pertinent information about other faiths and appreciate common values with respect for difference.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding

The highly professional, skilled and highly motivated headteacher and leadership team promote a clear Christian vision and school aims, recently reviewed by children, staff and governors, which is explicitly articulated to all stakeholders. There is a common understanding amongst all in the community that Weston-on-Trent is a school which practices the Christian values it advocates. All concerned are clear about the positive impact of the school's Christian ethos on children's well-being, achievement and relationships amongst all in the community. All staff and governors are perceived as contributing to the school's pursuit of continuous improvement at every level and contribute to development planning. Governors work together as a team of church school governors playing a full and effective role in monitoring and evaluation. They contribute significantly to the debate of the school's plans for on-going improvement. This includes monitoring of Christian distinctiveness, with reports to the full governing body and review of the school's church school self-assessment. Staff are empowered to take additional responsibility by relevant professional development opportunities, appraisal targets and a culture, strongly advocated by the headteacher, of shared leadership. Excellent use is made of diocesan support and training. Parents are resolute in their appreciation of the school's church foundation 'They care for one another...they get a foundation for life.... Weston gives them a moral compass' some said. These views are strongly supported by responses to school questionnaires. The partnership with St Mary's Church is of mutual and growing benefit, part of a wider commitment to village community life. RE and collective worship more than meet statutory requirements and the potential for further positive growth is excellent.

SIAMS report 2016 Weston-on-Trent CE VA Primary School Derbyshire DE72 2HX