

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

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

Forrester Avenue
Weston-on-Trent
Derbyshire
DE72 2HX

Diocese: Derby

Local authority: Derbyshire
Dates of inspection: 18.5.2011
Date of last inspection: 4.6.2008
School's unique reference number: 112890
Headteacher: Mrs. Helen Salih
Inspector's name and number: Dr. Peter Blunsdon 570

School context

Weston-on-Trent (Aided) Primary School is a smaller than average sized school of 108 pupils. It has an almost exclusively White British clientele, with a small number of pupils drawn from outside its normal area whose families have expressed a preference for a Christian education. The proportion of children in receipt of free school meals is well below the national average, as is the number of pupils identified as having additional needs and/or disabilities. The school has benefited from the relatively recent construction of new premises, which were opened in 2007. Weston-on-Trent (Aided) Primary School has achieved the standards required to have gained a number of nationally recognised awards, including Healthy Schools status and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

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

Weston-on-Trent (Aided) Primary School is a distinctive Christian school which is very much at the centre of community and parish life. The school premises are relatively new and have been planned and constructed with the school's Christian ethos very much in mind. Indeed, the headteacher had a central role in the project and, as a result, the building is child-centred and sympathetic to the needs of all who use it. The school grounds are well used for reflection and meetings of the worship planning group. There exists a particularly welcoming atmosphere, where staff and children are keen to present their school in the most positive light.

Established strengths

- The school benefits from a very cohesive staff team and governing body.
- Its premises provide a well planned, welcoming Christian environment in which to inspire children.
- The school, through its various routines and practices, fosters high levels of self-confidence and willingness to participate in a wide range of activities on the part of its pupils.
- It provides a prayerful and spiritual teaching and learning community for children, staff, governors and parents.

Focus for development

- To continue the development of multi-faith education and knowledge of the experience of other faith communities.
- To further develop the school's evaluation of attainment and progress in Religious Education
- To continue to seek ways in which the school's relationship with its local parish can develop in spite of the geographical distance between the two premises.

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

Weston-on-Trent (Aided) Primary School has a strong Christian ethos which pervades all aspects of its work. This is clearly exemplified in the school's organisation and its daily routines. Learners with additional needs are sympathetically supported by a caring staff and other pupils. The head and staff know their pupils well. The few difficulties that occur are dealt with in a calm and positive manner. The information provided by parental questionnaires reflects great satisfaction with the school. One parent commented, 'Most of the parents are very pleased with the school because of its inclusion and its nurturing of the children.' A parent-governor reflected that '... the staff are a warm and friendly body ... You're made to feel welcome.' It is evident that strong and caring relationships exist through the school and that these make a significant contribution towards a climate of success, confidence and achievement. The school's policies and practices are rooted in Christian values. Learners' spiritual needs are particularly well catered for, with opportunities to participate in the Worship Group, and to make up impromptu prayers as contributions to the daily act of collective worship.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is a prayerful and spiritual experience with a good level of pupil participation. The children show due reverence for both prayer and reflection and listen attentively to Christian stories. The hall is thoughtfully prepared with appropriate Christian signs and symbols. The Worship Group, which meets regularly and is primarily made up of upper junior children, is actively involved in the planning and delivery of worship and celebration. The children are confident enough to deliver their own impromptu prayers on themes of their own choosing. One parent commented: 'Children are encouraged to lead worship and they have confidence to pray out loud.' Music is lively and the children sing and move enthusiastically. Governors, parents and clergy are welcomed during worship and there is input into provision from a wide range of visiting speakers and groups. The children show enjoyment of worship. The high priority ascribed to the programme provided is reflected in good resourcing. Worship is evaluated by the children through a daily log. One foundation governor commented that, through its worship programme, '... the school promotes a sense of belonging and responsibility for each other.' The incumbent and a retired vicar, who is also a foundation governor and is well-known in the locality, visit the school regularly. This facilitates the reinforcement of the school-parish partnership, which is strong, in spite of the geographical distance between the two premises. As a result of all of this, Weston-on-Trent's worship programme contributes very well to the development of learners' spirituality, and enables them confidently to articulate their feelings and emotions.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Weston-on-Trent (Aided) Primary School has a lively and creative approach to Religious Education provision. The school's Christian ethos is effectively promoted. The headteacher brings both knowledge and understanding to her leadership of the subject. Teaching quality is good with much being achieved through challenging discussion and careful questioning. The children's knowledge of their own faith is good, whilst their understanding of the experience and beliefs of other faith communities continues to develop. This aspect of provision is now more embedded in the school's religious education programme than was the case in the past. Members of the governing body are keen to see this area of the school's work develop even further. Lessons are well planned and delivered, providing opportunities for the learners to both articulate and explain their own personal views and opinions. Younger pupils, during Religious Education, confidently and sensibly select their own self-initiated activities. The school provides a varied programme of visiting speakers and groups to enhance provision. Several of the children commented favourably on this aspect of R. E., one stating: "We like all the stuff we do ... we'd miss it if we weren't here!" ICT provision is very good and is used to enhance teaching and learning in Religious Education as, and when, appropriate. The evaluation of pupil progress and attainment is well underway, but is an aspect of the school's provision that the headteacher would like to develop further. The children know a range of prayers and lively religious songs, and they are used to preparing their own 'thoughts' for reflection. Standards of achievement and progress in R. E. through the school are good.

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

The headteacher provides excellent leadership. She is ably supported by a strong and cohesive staff team and body of governors. The school's Christian vision is understood by its stakeholders. One parent commented on the school's '... family atmosphere and how children look after each other.' Another stated: "What impressed me here was a strong sense of community." A parent-governor enthused about the school's over-subscription ... "Over-subscription is very positive. It means we can serve an even bigger community." The school team clearly have pride in their mission. The leadership of Weston-on-Trent (Aided) Primary School is a highly collaborative activity. Religious Education and collective worship are organised and managed by the 'culture team' of which the headteacher is the leader. Relationships are very strong and the school clearly benefits from staff stability. The leadership team, of which all teaching staff are effectively members, uses the school's Christian character to nourish, encourage and challenge the personal and spiritual development of all learners. Foundation governors are active in their role, providing challenge, support and a developing strategic view for the school's continuing improvement. The relationship between the school and its parish is strong. The head, clergy, staff and governors' commitment to providing an inclusive, spiritual and prayerful environment is appreciated by the children, who are rightly proud of their school. Ultimately, the headteacher and her staff, actively supported by the governing body, provide outstanding leadership of this very welcoming community-based Church of England primary school.

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