

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Woodcocks' Well Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Street
Mow Cop
Stoke on Trent
ST7 3NQ

Diocese: Chester

Local authority: Cheshire
Dates of inspection: 28th April 2008
Date of last inspection: 14th – 16th June 2004
School's unique reference number:
Headteacher: Julie Massen
Inspector's name and number: Gail Fullbrook NS 530

School context

Woodcocks' Well Church of England Primary School is a small school in the village of Mow Cop which straddles the Cheshire Staffordshire border. It is one of two schools serving the village, the other school coming under the authority of Staffordshire. There are 73 children on roll. The school serves the local community and also draws children from the surrounding area. Pupils are predominantly of white British ethnicity and are from a mix of socioeconomic backgrounds.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Woodcocks' Well as a Church of England school are good

The school has good links with the church and the local community and has a warm and welcoming family atmosphere. The Christian ethos centres around the school's strong community and its high quality care for each and every child. Christian principles and values are promoted effectively and respect towards others underpins the work of the school.

Established strengths

- The care and concern demonstrated by the school for all pupils and their families.
- The school's secure place within its community and the quality of relationships demonstrated between all members of the school family.
- Very good links with the parish church.

Focus for development

- To undertake a more detailed period of self evaluation of the school as a church school and draw up an action plan for its future development
- To strengthen the outward signs of the Christian nature of the school through public documentation
- To identify ways in which the spirituality of the children can be deepened.

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

Woodcocks' Well is a school where children enjoy their learning and are confident that they are liked and cared for. The children are proud of their school and feel that they are treated fairly. The rich learning environment created within the school is symbolic of the care and attention given to every aspect of the school's provision. Displays focusing on the natural environment develop an appreciation of the created world and reinforce the responsibility of the children to care for it. The children say their teachers 'encourage them' and are respectful of staff and their peers. The School Council effectively fulfils its role of identifying ways of developing the school, raising issues of concern and dealing with them. They feel well supported by staff and are confident that their views and ideas will be taken seriously. Children have a well defined understanding of their own responsibility to care for each other and they respect and value difference. They are given opportunities to develop individual spiritual awareness and seek to apply Christian values in relationships with others. The school is aware of the need to develop the range of opportunities offered. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children is good. Displays in the school hall of children's prayers and Christian symbols and are used by children during worship and at

other times during the school day. They are able to make simple observations about personal faith. Children support overseas projects with enthusiasm and have a good awareness of the diversity of the world in which they live. The staff team work well together and all contribute to the school's caring ethos. Parents are strong in their affirmation of the school's care for, and nurture of, individual children which defines the school's inclusive nature. Christian values of love, care and acceptance are used as the basis for the school's good practices regarding Child Protection, racism and bullying. The school has procedures in place where children fall short of acceptable behaviour and consequently children feel secure.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is seen as an important aspect of the school's daily life. It takes a different form each day and all are valued enthusiastically by the children. All teaching staff lead worship and Rector Terry leads worship weekly. Children make connections between the stories they hear and their own lives ensuring that God is seen as a daily presence in all they do. Worship begins with a short liturgy, committed to memory, as the candles are lit and the Bible and cross brought to the table. It clearly marks the transition from a gathering to worship and the children become noticeably more focused. Time is given for reflection, prayer – often written by the children, and praise through the songs sung. This clearly impacts on the children's good spiritual development. The children are respectful of the worshipful atmosphere and are able to recall stories told in the past that have had an impact on their lives. A child recalled the story of a boy who thought the world was fuzzy and its message of life being fuzzy without an awareness of God. Worship is held regularly in church when parents and members of the community are encouraged to attend. Parents report the need to arrive early, such is the popularity of the worship, and church worship is a highlight for the children who feel comfortable and 'at home' in 'their' church. Rector Terry is actively involved in the planning and evaluation of worship along with the staff team. Good records are kept and there is a clear commitment to making worship relevant to the children and to involving them within it.

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

The headteacher, new to the school in January 2007, was appointed permanently in September 2007. The school is undergoing a period of rigorous self evaluation with a focus on standards and provision and is now beginning to extend that focus to include the school's role as a church school. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school as a place where children are given the opportunity to develop Christian values. She gives strong leadership to the committed staff team. Attention to detail is made evident through parental comments that nothing is too small to be important. Consequently parents feel involved in their child's education and a valued part of the school community. Children confidently expect any concerns or worries to be addressed and they are not disappointed. All members of the school family feel they have a voice and are listened to. The school plays an active role in village life supporting community events. The weekly lunches, when parents and members of the community are invited to join the school at lunchtime, strengthen this role. Parents are invited in to school to discuss ways of further developing the links between the church and school. Although there are many visual stimuli around the school to remind children and visitors of the school's Christian nature, the school's public documentation does not reinforce this. The on-site air raid shelters which are used by visiting schools seeking a World War Two evacuee experience, are enriched by first hand stories from a local resident. The school works in partnership with Congleton museum to provide this experience and children from the school benefit from the contact with visiting children and young people from many different settings. School safety procedures are good and children enjoy the challenge of their school grounds which steeply climb the hillside. A wide variety of provision for children, parents and families supports teaching and learning and includes computing, art and literacy classes for adults and boxing, gardening, football and street dancing for children. Foundation governors play a significant role in the life of the school and are appreciative of what they see as an 'excellent staff team'. They reinforce the headteacher's clear vision for the school and are appreciative of her ability to make good plans and act on them.