

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

High Wych Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
High Wych
Sawbridgeworth
Hertfordshire
CM21 0JB

Diocese: St Albans

Local authority: Hertfordshire

Dates of inspection: 7 February 2012

Date of last inspection: 4 May 2009

School's unique reference number: 117398

Headteacher: Mrs Mandy West

Inspector's name and number: Ms Chris Westgarth 44

School context

High Wych is a popular school that serves a wide area as well as the immediate locality. Most pupils are White British and the proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals and with a Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) are lower than average. The school has a wide range of awards, including the silver eco school award, sports active mark, Becta mark for ICT and Healthy Schools Status

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of High Wych as a Church of England school are good

High Wych is a good church school, which is valued by everyone. It is inclusive, all are welcomed and everyone is encouraged to reach their full potential. Staff have the highest regard for one another and for the pupils in their care and this has a significant impact on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils receive a good education underpinned by the Christian values of care, love, forgiveness and compassion.

Established strengths

- The commitment of the staff to nurturing pupils personal development
- The welcoming ethos of the school that creates a sense of belonging for everyone
- The excellent relationships that promote respect throughout the school community

Focus for development

- Fully embed the planning, monitoring and evaluation of Collective worship
- Further explore Christianity as a world faith
- Ensure that training for new governors and staff is a priority

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

Christian values are clearly evident in the daily life of the school. Their impact on the lives and routines of the school is reflected in the ability of pupils to make clear links between these and the teaching of Jesus. The welcome to visitors from adults and children alike shows the care, love and respect that underpin the ethos of this school. There are excellent relationships between all members of the community with pupils and parents rightly saying *'High Wych is like a big family'*. There is indeed a strong family feel within the school, with older pupils readily supporting younger ones and all staff are excellent role models for the children. This results in new pupils quickly becoming established in the school and pupils helping each other when there is a need. Behaviour observed was good and learners were polite and showed respect. Displays are effectively used to make links between everyday life, Christian values, and areas of the curriculum. The school has recently celebrated its 150th anniversary and the delightful quilt, displays and the Bishop's visit show how proud the school is of their Christian heritage. The signs and symbols of the Christian religion are clearly displayed in key locations throughout the school. Pupils enjoy caring for their school and grounds. Community cohesion is strong locally but not embedded nationally and internationally. Locally this is enhanced by the school's involvement at the community apple-picking day. Pupils are rightly proud of their allotments and the awards they won at the village show. Charitable giving is strong both locally and internationally with pupils keen to help those in need. The school grounds are delightful and enhance the learning environment. As one pupil said *'There is something here for everyone'* and this is confirmed by the new multi games area, the allotment, the quiet area and the opportunities to watch the kestrels nest via the web cam.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective Worship is central to the school day and valued by pupils and staff alike. The themes are based around the teacher's dozen and diocesan themes. Older pupils are involved in setting the hall up ready for worship and for operating the projector and music system. They perform these tasks with great confidence, calmness and skill; this was clearly observed during the act of collective worship when the computer suffered a serious malfunction. Children enter and exit the hall quietly and with respect. There are good levels of participation and pupils speak positively about worship but would like to be more involved in *'taking part, speaking and praying'*. The church building is used once a week and for special services and pupils feel that the church is their church. Class prayers are said and children know the Lord's prayer. The new worship coordinator is having a positive influence and has many lovely ideas for progression. As such worship is planned, monitored and evaluated but this is yet to be fully embedded. However there are plans for the school council to be involved in pupil evaluation of worship, which will be beneficial. Knowledge and understanding of world faiths is strong (a focus for development in the last inspection) and this is enhanced by many visits to places of worship. Pupils often make comparisons between other faiths and Christianity. The school is planning to focus on worldwide Christianity although this is not yet fully embedded.

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

The prospectus, policies, website and other documentation promote the school as a church school and are underpinned by a new mission statement which is based on Christian values. The collaborative creation of the statement ensures that the Christian values permeate across the whole school life. Furthermore, ably led by the Head and senior leadership team, staff and governors have an excellent understanding of their school and the wider community. Governors are effective in monitoring the distinctive Christian character of the school, although recent changes mean that not everyone is up-to speed with this responsibility. The relatively new incumbent is involved in the life of the school and visits weekly. The governing body has benefited from Diocesan training on the distinctive Christian character of the school. Now there is the opportunity to build on the strong foundations already laid and undertake further Diocesan training for new governors and teachers. The school council and eco group are involved in decision-making and take their role very seriously. As a result, pupils are able to voice their desires and concerns. The school is highly regarded in the community. Parents speak positively about the links between Church and School and the Christian ethos.

