



Holywell Church of England (VC) Primary School

Mill Way
Needingworth
St Ives
Cambridgeshire
PE27 4TF

Diocese: Ely

Local authority: Cambridgeshire
Dates of inspection: 5th- 6th July 2007
Date of last inspection: July 2002
School's unique reference number: 110817
Headteacher: Mrs Sue Vickery
Inspector's name and number: Peter Adams (205)

School context

Holywell C of E (VC) Primary School serves the villages of Holywell and Needingworth near St Ives. There are currently 186 pupils on roll, of which almost all are from a White British background. A small number come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Overall, the pupils' socio-economic circumstances are advantaged and almost all pupils come from owner-occupier homes. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Holywell C of E (VC) as a Church of England school are good

This is a well-organised and caring church school with a clear aims and sense of purpose. The strong Christian values are evident in the excellent behaviour of the learners and the schools' involvement with the local community. Pupil voice is valued and learners clearly identify themselves with the ethos. Parents/carers are supportive of the school and trust the decisions of the leadership and staff.

Established strengths

- The leadership of the school gives a strong commitment and impetus to the delivery of a Christian ethos.
- Learners are valued and treated as individuals enabling them to develop in a safe and inclusive Christian environment.
- Good inter-staff relationships provide a clear example and role models for the learners.
- Links with the local community are strong and mutually supportive.

Focus for development

- The review of the Mission Statement and Aims of the school to reflect the Christian foundation and ethos
- Training to help Foundation Governors develop their role of nourishment, support and challenge to the school as a church school.
- The use of appropriate Christian symbols and displays to clearly demonstrate the church foundation of the school for learners, staff and the wider community.
- Improve systems for the evaluation of Collective Worship to show how it supports spiritual growth and affirmation of faith.

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

All school staff are valued and relationships are good. A member of the support staff said: 'There is strong and supportive leadership, I really like working here.' There is a unity of purpose, a good sense of teamwork and mutual support. This is reflected in the way that learners are made to feel special; Teaching Assistants at the school commented: 'There is a real sense of community, the children are nurtured here.' The Rural Dean said 'This is a warm place to be, the staff are always positive and smiling. The children are confident and prepared to interact in assemblies.'

The school has established positive links with the parents/carers. Communication is effective, enabling them to be supportive of the school. Parents/carers attend Assembly and Collective Worship regularly. One parent said 'The teachers are very approachable, you never feel you are interrupting.'

A strong emphasis is put on the school logo that gives a clear identity to the Christian character of the school. The logo is displayed on school documents and uniform. Learners at the school are familiar with the symbols on the logo and can explain the significance of them, including the cross. There are colourful displays of children's work throughout the school, including multi-cultural themes.

The school has gained an award as a Health Promoting School, the learners are aware of this and are anxious to promote all aspects of healthy living.

Ofsted (2007) reported that the behaviour of learners was good. 'Pupils respond to teachers' expectations by behaving well and relating very well to adults and each other.' They work comfortably alongside each other in the open plan environment. Children at the school are courteous and considerate to each other and to adults.

Pupil voice is seen as important and the work of the school and class councils is encouraged in school development. This has influenced the purchase and organisation of equipment for lunchtime play, a survey of out of school activities and ideas for after school clubs. Learners are encouraged to take on responsibilities within the school, they feel safe and are proud of their achievements. Christian values are evident through the schools' commitment to charitable causes. The children themselves often take the initiative in the choice of charity. These have included Christmas Child, Macmillan Nurses and 'Buy a Cow.'

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective Worship is well-planned, structured to meet the needs of all learners and takes a significant and central role in the life of the school. Worship is Christian in character and reflects key times in the church year. There has clearly been a great deal of thought put into the organisation of Collective Worship since the last inspection (Section 23), when this was seen as a key issue for development.

The learners have opportunities to participate and share their views. One child said 'We like assemblies that are funny.' Collective Worship provides a variety of Christian worship styles and supports Anglican practice and heritage.

The school takes care to provide appropriate experiences for all learners, including times for quiet reflection to facilitate spiritual growth. The church building is used as an effective resource and as a venue for end of term and festival services.

The school values the input given by the church community and regularly presents gifts to the church. The most recent was at Easter, when a book of prayers linked to Easter and new life was given. The book was displayed in the church for the congregation. Members of the

School Council said that they enjoyed festival and end of term services held in the church – particularly Christingle and Harvest Festival. They also appreciated the annual Well Dressing service. This year the theme has been 'Freedom' which has resulted in high quality creative work in the school.

Learners can recall recent acts of worship, including Bible stories and relate them to adults. Prayer is a natural part of Collective Worship. ('We always have prayers'). They are familiar with the Lord's Prayer and appreciate times for reflection and quiet prayer. Passages from the Bible in modern translation are used in Collective Worship.

Some evaluation of the impact Collective Worship has been carried out with learners.

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

The headteacher is committed to the Christian ethos of the school and gives a strong and effective lead to the school community. Christian values are well established and permeate all areas of school life. The leadership team works well together and is able to make accurate evaluations of the strengths of the school and areas for development.

A positive and close relationship with the previous Priest in charge had been developed over time that supported the church life of the school. This came to an end at the beginning of this year. The current Priest in charge who is also the Rural Dean has established a good relationship with the school and is providing effective pastoral support. He regularly leads Collective Worship along with the Church Wardens, the Pastor of the local Baptist Church and other Christian organisations.

The school plans to review the Mission Statement later this year. This will involve the whole community with the aim of reaffirming the direction of the school as a Christian establishment. There is evidence that the Foundation Governors are involved in the life of the school, give good support and provide some encouragement and challenge. However the regular monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship by the Governors is not fully in place.

The school enjoys a supportive and productive relationship with the church. Members of the church run a monthly club for Y5/6 children – 'The Needingworth Nutters', there are also other activities including an annual party as an alternative to Hallowe'en and activities such as bulb planting in the Garden of Remembrance.

There are also well-established relationships with other organisations and a link with a school in Uganda that has potential for development.

The governors take an interest in the health and well-being of the staff.

The parents/carers are supportive in a range of church services and events.

The Christian ethos is evident in relationships, mutual care and respect between all members of the school community.

SIAS report July 2007 Holywell C of E (VC) Primary School, Mill Way, Needingworth, St Ives, Cambridgeshire PE27 4TF