

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

William Walter Primary School

The Street
Woodham Walter
Maldon
Essex
CM9 6RF

Diocese: Chelmsford

Local authority: Essex
Dates of inspection: 12th January
Date of last inspection: 22nd September 2009
School's unique reference number: 115123
Acting Headteacher: Mrs Sue Dodd
Inspector's name and number: Dr Duncan Ramsey

School context

Woodham Walter Church of England Primary is a relatively small school. Most children come from a White British heritage. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average and the proportion of children with special needs is average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Woodham Walter as a Church of England school are good.

Woodham Walter is a good school because there is a strong, distinctively Christian ethos which is effectively shared amongst the whole community. Relationships in school are very good and this means that children are flourishing in a caring environment.

Established strengths

- The quality of relationships in school are particularly caring.
- The partnership with a school in Kenya and the positive impact this has on the life of the school and the local community
- The central role the school plays at the heart of Woodham Walter village
- The children's active participation in acts of worship

Focus for development

- To include a focus for improving Woodham Walter as a distinctively Church School in each year's School Development Plan.
- To enhance the impact of the Kenyan partnership on the spiritual development of children.

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

There is a good Christian ethos at Woodham Walter school that is supported by all members of the school community. Effective interim leadership has successfully developed a series of school Christian values. These values have been successfully linked to the everyday life of children. For example, kindness and compassion is evident in all aspects of the schools life. Children like these values and understand them well. They talk confidently about how they can help one another feel happy at school. Woodham Walter is a very inclusive school that welcomes children irrespective of background or ability and supports everyone equally. The school proudly displays its church status though the school website and prospectus. Around school there is a wide range of Christian symbols in the entrance hall, the school hall and the classrooms. Children feel safe and valued because of the secure site and the way adults

treat them with love and respect. Parents say that the school looks after their children well and is good at helping them to settle in. A wide range of extra-curricular activities including the JAM (Jesus and Me) club provide stimulating and interesting support to the school curriculum and pupil's spiritual development. The partnership with the church is developing into a close and mutually supportive relationship. The relatively new priest works closely with the head teacher to ensure that the partnership supports the development of children. The link with a school in Kenya has been used to help children develop their spiritual, social, cultural and moral understanding and there is room for this to have an even deeper impact. Children are actively involved in community life for example through raising money for charity and singing carols in the marketplace at Christmas time. The school environment has been developed well to include a quiet area and the local forest is used very effectively to enhance the curriculum. There are opportunities for the outdoor area to be developed further to support the spiritual development of children. Religious Education is taught effectively across the whole school and impacts positively on the schools Christian character.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.

Acts of worship are planned around the Anglican annual cycle and children are developing a good understanding of Anglican traditions and prayers. Children enjoy acts of worship and have excellent opportunities to become actively involved. Many assemblies are stimulating and exciting. The quality of singing is good. Children talk enthusiastically about acts of worship, including one that helps them think about being kind to one another. They are given lots of opportunities to role play bible stories such as the Good Samaritan. The quality of prayer is being developed and children are given the opportunity to lead prayer in assembly as well as in their classroom. Children have the opportunity to visit the local church regularly. Parents too are welcome to join in a range of acts of worship both in school and in Church and this contributes to a very positive sense of community worship. There is a worship timetable that has been developed for the year but this could be enhanced by providing increased guidance to those leading each session. Themes are followed on a half termly basis and specific Christian values are reinforced and reflected upon daily. There is a good partnership between the church and school in developing this programme, and the twice monthly visits by the church team are really appreciated by the children. Monitoring of the acts of worship has recently been introduced and this includes seeking the opinions of children staff and parents. The information gained is being used to further develop the act of worship programme.

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

Effective interim leadership has ensured that children have continued to make excellent progress. The acting head teacher has helped the school move forward by ensuring high expectations and perceptively deciding the next steps for school improvement. The recent focus on developing and refining the school Christian values has helped children apply their knowledge and behaviour more closely to biblical principles. The governors provide excellent support to the school with an effective balance of challenge and support. There is a strong emphasis on continual development with a determination to keep on improving. School development planning does not always include improving aspects of Woodham Walter as a distinctively church school in its annual cycle. Leadership at all levels has created a school that is a safe, secure and enjoyable place for children to attend. The school has good systems for monitoring its policies and is very good at ensuring governors, staff and the local church have the opportunity to contribute to policy development. The school has good systems in place to monitor the views of children and parents and acts on these accordingly. Very good leadership of the Forest Schools project and the Kenyan project has helped make the curriculum interesting and exciting for children and these projects are used to help develop the children as they grow up. These could be further developed to increase the impact on the spiritual development of children. Children greatly enjoy the celebration assemblies and feel proud when the head teacher gives them an award. Teachers too, have a big impact on the development of children through the excellent relationships that have been encouraged around the school. Good progress has been made since the last inspection as the quality of self-evaluation has improved and the new school values have been developed effectively.