

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Name and address of school: Needwood Church of England Voluntary Aided, Yoxall Road, Newborough, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire DE13 8SU
Type of school Primary Status VA
Diocese Lichfield Local Authority Staffordshire
Dates of inspection 08/03/2013
Date of last inspection 01:05:2008
School's Unique reference number 124337
Name of Headteacher Miss Michelle O'Dell
Inspector's name: R Mary Gale Inspector's number: 337

School context

Needwood Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is a popular small rural primary school with 52 pupils in the village of Newborough. 46% of pupils come from further afield. The pupils are taught in two mixed age classes. The vast majority of children are from a white British background. A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection. The benefice has also experienced a recent change regarding its leadership.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Needwood Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School as a Church of England school are good

Needwood C.E. (VA) Primary School is a good school because its relationships are founded on Christian values. The school community is welcoming. It thrives on offering the best opportunities to its pupils. A strong and vibrant Christian ethos is the key element in the school's determination to ensure that each child continues to succeed.

Established strengths

- The supportive and caring ethos of the school community.
- The promotion of Christian values by the whole school community, especially the headteacher, which have a positive impact on all.
- The delightful, respectful and courteous children.

Focus for development

- Involve governors in a formal and systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating the impact of the Christian aspects of school life, especially with regard to collective worship, so as to inform future developments.
- Develop consistent assessment procedures in Religious Education throughout the school.
- Take forward and embed the plans already identified to further develop Christian distinctiveness. These plans include, enhancing the pupils' understanding of Anglican faith and practice, extending the use of reflective areas, (especially in the school hall) introducing the elements of the Eucharist and raising awareness of global links.

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

Needwood CE VA Primary school is very effective in giving everyone in the school community a real sense of self-worth. The school community lives and work in a distinctly Christian environment. Pupils of all ages are confident. There is a positive learning environment where pupils are cherished and valued. The pupils flourish as individuals as every pupil is important to the staff. Relationships are nurtured so that everyone feels cared for as one big family. In the words of the pupils, "*the headteacher cares for all of us*". These relationships between everyone in the school, which are based on mutual respect and trust, are outstanding. This school is seen to value the widest range of achievement through the varied activities offered to pupils and so these confident pupils feel able to make a positive contribution at home, in the community and at school. The school council is effective in ensuring learners have a voice in school decisions. They are proud of the contribution they make to important decisions. Pupils enjoy donating to charity through which they experience the Christian values of service and gratitude. Learners have a high sense of self-awareness; they are curious, independent and are willing to voice their own ideas, communicating well. Most pupils take part in regular silent reflection time and understand the benefits of this. There are exciting plans to develop an outside reflection area to further support pupils'

spiritual journey. Pupils thrive in their learning and in their personal development. They have a strong social conscience and are always keen to help others both in and out of school. Older pupils regularly pair up with younger ones to offer guidance and support, as witnessed when they walked to All Saints church together. Pupils' theological knowledge is developing. For example, some can explain the symbolic use of language whilst learning about the parables of Jesus and older pupils have a good knowledge of the Easter narrative. All parents value the positive environment provided at this school which is evident in the way pupils conduct themselves at home and in the local community. This school truly embodies what it means to be a kind and caring school, celebrating the school motto "Achieving and Believing".

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is an important part of school life. Pupils enjoy all aspects of worship. They recognise that each week there is a focus on a different Christian theme. As a result worship over the school year is creative and well planned. This variety of worship experienced enables pupils to share their thoughts and feelings thus developing empathy for others. Major festivals in the church year are celebrated both at school and in the local All Saints church. The pupils' presence is welcomed by the worshipping parish community. The pupils enjoy worshipping as one big family. As one pupil said, "*place and time is not important, it's just being together that matters*". Pupils speak positively about their collective worship experience. One pupil said "*Worship means being together as a family.*" They respond to issues raised with great sensitivity, and consider important matters through prayer and reflection. The church-run creative Christian after school club, which takes place from time to time enhances pupils' spiritual development. Worship is enriched by visitors. These include the Bishop and leaders from other denominations and cultures: this provides experiences which further extend pupil knowledge. Pupils are able to explain that a candle is lit for special festivals and some knew that it reminded them that "*Jesus is the light of the world.*" Another pupil said "*You light a candle to remember those who have died and say a prayer.*" Over time there is good use of prayer both in worship and in the school day. Prayers and bible readings are read during worship. During the worship observed at All Saints church led by the pupils and the Vicar for a Mother's day service, they listened attentively and shared their thoughts and feelings regarding their mothers. They shared their historical knowledge about Mothering Sunday traditions and made connections between these and their lives today. This was well received by the parents who attended. Pupils are able to express how worship both at church and in school is meaningful to them personally. However pupils' knowledge and understanding of Anglican rituals in worship is currently under-developed. Aspects of social, moral, cultural and spiritual development can be clearly identified in the worship examples given, evidenced through discussion with pupils. Year 5 and 6 experience worship at Lichfield Cathedral's Open Door as part of the diocesan family. There are plans to bring aspects of the Eucharist into school. In all these ways collective worship evolves and enhances pupils' spiritual development. Governors are keen to formally evaluate worship.

The effectiveness of Religious Education is good

Religious Education is recognised by the majority of learners and stakeholders as an essential component of the whole school curriculum. Religious education [RE] impacts well on the Christian character of the school. For example, pupils relate how stories from different faiths teach them about God and "*how to help other people*". The subject is well resourced. All staff benefit from a clear RE policy and scheme of work. The teaching and learning observed in a Key Stage 2 class was good, with an effective use of interactive white board, talking partners and research teams to stimulate thinking at all levels. An example of interactive learning was seen in discussion with the pupils on the topic of Holy books and symbols. When questioned about the Bible, whilst carrying out research about the language it was written in, they answered "*the Bible is written in Hebrew and Greek*". The differentiated tasks presented result in pupils working willingly and responding readily with enthusiasm and enjoyment. Most pupils across the age groups can re-call (with some prompting for the younger pupils) the facts of major Christian festivals and some Bible stories. Appropriate consideration is given to the learning of different faiths particularly through the recent "Diversity and Difference" topic. The majority of pupils reach standards in RE which are in line with the core subjects for their Key Stage. However, although the pupils are able to talk about their religious learning experiences with a degree of confidence they are sometimes unable to use explicit religious vocabulary to label Anglican aspects of the

church or discuss Bible stories, especially in Key Stage 1. The co-ordinator for religious education is leading the subject well, having an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development. It is recognised in the self-evaluation document that there needs to be a consistent whole school approach to formative assessment in order to maximise pupil potential.

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

The headteacher, who is also the worship and RE co-ordinator, supported by the Governors, has a clear vision of how distinctive Christian values need to be central to school life. These school leaders speak confidently and accurately about the Christian vision for the school. There is formal monitoring and evaluation of worship by staff to inform and support the school's development as a church school these now need to be enhanced by Governors. Positive relationships throughout the school show the key role that Christian values play in its witnessing life and mission to the local community. Everyone feels valued. In this school all work hard to ensure the development of pupils to their fullest potential, equipping them with skills for life. As a result older pupils are very clear that Needwood is a Church of England Aided school, younger pupils are less clear of this distinction. The school's high profile and active involvement in the local community is having a positive impact on pupils. Governors take an active role in the life of the school and are keen now to formalise the evaluation of the school's progress as a Christian school. Areas from the last inspection have been addressed. The school works closely with the diocese. The school is looking forward to utilising the future training, support and resources, offered by the Diocesan Board of Education. Support, by staff for the future development of the Christian distinctiveness and the furthering of Anglican faith and practice is evident.

Parents report that their children are developing a real sense of responsibility with genuine care and concern for the community in which they live. They report "*They are happy and contented at school.*" They are appreciative of the ways in which their views are informally and formally sought. The mission statement and aims of the school are practically implemented by the leaders in every aspect of the life and work of the school. Developing global links enhances community cohesion. The school organises fund raising for charities in this country and abroad, which in turn raises increased awareness of community cohesion by the whole school community. The school community is involved in striving for continuous improvement. This results in effective teamwork and in a clear strategic sense of direction and Christian purpose throughout the school.