

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Wrockwardine Wood Church of England Junior School

Church Road, Trench, Telford, TF2 7HG	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Lichfield
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Satisfactory
Local authority	Telford and Wrekin
Date of inspection	10 November 2016
Date of last inspection	22 November 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 123520
Headteacher	Julie Henry
Inspector's name and number	Allyson Taylor 768

School context

Wrockwardine Wood Church of England Junior School has a rising roll; currently 265 pupils are educated in ten classes. The school serves the community of Trench. Most children transfer from Wrockwardine Wood Infant School which is not a church school. The majority of children are white British. The proportion of children with additional needs, who are disadvantaged and those who come from different faiths and cultures has increased. The headteacher, formerly the deputy head, has been at the school since 2007. A new Mission Statement: 'Love, Laughter and Learning' was written after widespread consultation. There is currently a vacancy at Holy Trinity church.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Wrockwardine Wood as a Church of England school are good

- Wrockwardine Wood is a special place, filled with 'Love, Laughter and Learning' where every child and every adult is valued and nurtured as a child of God.
- Its distinctiveness has improved significantly since the last inspection so that the environment, website and key policies show that this is safe, secure and inclusive Christian community.
- An effervescent sense of fun is palpable and this encourages and supports each child which leads to generally good results in national assessments.
- Leadership is securely based on Christian principles of inclusion so that adults and children are cherished and challenged to grow spiritually and intellectually.
- Curriculum provision is rich and enables those who are more able and those who need additional help to succeed.

Areas to improve

- Make links between the chosen values and Bible texts more explicit so that all members of the school community may articulate how they are explicitly Christian and support wider outcomes, including learning.
- Extend formal systems for governors to evaluate the Christian character and worship as well as religious education (RE) to more fully inform development plans and drive the school to outstanding as a church school.
- Use a wider range of Anglican traditions in collective worship to enhance spiritual development and learners' understanding of common practices in the Anglican Church.
- Review assessment of RE to enable teachers to ensure progress matches that of other subjects.

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

Wrockwardine Wood is a special place where the Christian distinctiveness and so its effectiveness have transformed in recent times, most notably since the former deputy head became headteacher in September 2015. Since the last inspection, a review of the mission statement, aims and Christian character has resulted in a school which is proud of its Christian foundations. This motivates adults to meet the increasingly wide needs of learners. 'Love' is evident between all ages in the school community and learners speak eloquently about how much all staff help them. They explain how Christian values, like generosity and compassion, enable them to work and grow together. One said: 'If I see that someone needs help, I give it and then they will help me when I need it.' Learners are less confident, however, in stating where examples of the values may be seen in specific teaching from the Bible. Adults and children demonstrate the commandment to 'love one another'; they live this out as naturally as breathing and in a joyous way which is infectious. Behaviour between all ages is good and the impact of this is seen in the way older children and younger children support each other. As a result of the Christian values, based on the 'Roots and Shoots' resource, personal development, wellbeing and academic progress are good. From initiatives like the learning launch pad, pre-learning, nurture groups, forest teams and even breakfast baskets offered each morning, the school makes wellbeing a priority. As learners feel secure and loved they are able to face challenges in their lives and learning. The difference between results for more vulnerable children and their peers is narrowing as a direct result of the commitment to ensure that all are helped to overcome barriers to their learning. Staff devote exemplary care for children, their families and each other. This is a school which truly makes a difference to the lives of all involved in its mission. Improvements in academic results and attendance show the impact of the exceptional care and strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision. At this time, there is a shared understanding, but not a clear definition of 'spirituality,' and this limits curriculum plans for spiritual development.

The quality of RE teaching and learning has improved dramatically following review by staff and governors. The subject makes a significant contribution to the Christian character and mission of the school. The RE curriculum, based on the locally agreed syllabus and new 'Understanding Christianity' resources gives learners a good knowledge of a range of faiths and reinforces the Christian values. As such, the subject enables learners to show respect for each other, regardless of faith or culture. A Year 6 boy said: 'I am not a Christian, but I respect those who are and like lots of what they believe.' A younger girl said: 'we step into others' shoes to understand them.'

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is instrumental in defining the Christian character of Wrockwardine. Acts of worship conclude the school day and combine a strong sense of community with reverence. Worship is valued by adults and children. Adults, in particular, say attending worship builds their shared commitment to each other and to the vital roles they play. Worship is the main vehicle for exploring the Christian values with a programme which deepens understanding over a half-term. As many different Bible stories are covered, this may explain why children are less able to give specific examples of where the value is seen. Despite the vacancy for an incumbent, 'Open the Book' volunteers and the chair of governors work hard to maintain spiritual support for the school. Rev. Page gives as much support as she can while the parish appoints a new incumbent. Links with Holy Trinity church remain strong and the school celebrates the main Christian festivals in church with children planning and leading these special events. Worship has improved following feedback from children. Pupil voice has been sought, heard and acted upon so that Year 6 children now support 'Open the Book' worship and devote time to preparing how they do so. This is the result of input from the dedicated Deputy Head who liaises with the Year 6 pupils and parish volunteers. While all children participate and contribute by tuneful singing and offering and joining in prayers, there is scope to allow younger children to take a more active part in leading worship. The experienced worship coordinator plans the programme to reflect the main seasons of the church's calendar and to reflect local needs. Most striking is the devotion to offering prayerful support for a former pupil with a serious illness. A candle is lit in his name as well as a candle as a symbol for Jesus as the light of the world. Children are agents for change and their campaign to raise funds for their former classmate is astonishing; over £50,000 raised towards adapting his home to meet his physical needs.

Much worship is Bible based with regular mention of the life and teaching of Jesus. Its structure includes aspects of Anglican worship. While children say the Lord's prayer daily, they are less familiar with other Anglican traditions such as greetings or blessings. They do, however, have a growing understanding of the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Curriculum time is devoted to exploring this complex concept at an age-appropriate level. Time for reflection is given each day and this is developed in the reflection spaces in each classroom, which this year, were created with, as well as for, the children. The worship life of the school does not include saying Grace before lunch. However, closing the day with prayer provides regular opportunities for spiritual development.

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

A strong shared vision for this school as a church school has sustained staff, leaders and governors through fluctuations in standards. The strength of this vision is seen in the inclusive way the school embraces children who have experienced difficulties elsewhere and who then flourish at Wrockwardine. Leaders are to be commended for the many improvements they have secured in the Christian character, particularly in RE and worship. Much of this is due to the compassionate, engaging and inspirational leadership of the headteacher. She sets the tone and expectations for all staff. It is notable that a number of teachers joined as NQTs and have grown, developed and stayed at Wrockwardine. This demonstrates the school's commitment to growing future leaders of church schools. A harmonious spirit of mutual respect and support enables all staff: teaching, administration and support staff, to live out the love they share and sense of pride in their school. 'Everything we do is for the children,' said one member of staff. Partnerships between staff and families are mutually beneficial. Parents appreciate the care and guidance they receive as families as well as the way their children are encouraged to learn. Parents gave specific examples of how the school has transformed their children's self-esteem: 'my child is a different child.'

Governors know the school well and play an active part in attending worship, evaluating progress in RE and approving improvement plans. The chair of governors, who is a foundation governor, is key to keeping the focus on church school distinctiveness. As a result, difficult decisions, which affected staffing, were made to ensure the quality of RE lessons improved. The headteacher states: 'our RE simply wasn't good enough for our children!' Evidence of improvement is seen in the high quality of work and feedback in books. Leaders have rightly identified that more robust assessment of RE is their next step. Other actions show leaders' determination to develop the Christian character of the school. For example, the introduction of a programme of Christian values, the development of a new mission statement and the professional development for teachers in RE all demonstrate that this is a school determined to shine as a church school. The 'Love, Laughter and Learning' statement and Christian values are referenced in those policies recently reviewed. The higher profile of the Christian character is at a relatively early stage and more systematic monitoring is acknowledged as the way to ensure the recent changes become 'embedded'.

Leaders have addressed the development points from the 2011 inspection, albeit more recently. They acknowledge the rapid improvements made since 2015 and attribute this to the shared vision which the headteacher has driven forward apace. The timely advice from the diocesan adviser has also helped drive improvements. Her suggestions have been taken on board and swiftly implemented.

A cycle of monitoring for governors is in place and feedback is noted in some full governing body minutes. At present, more formal and structured systems for governors to monitor worship and the Christian character as well as RE are not in place. This means that governors' monitoring and evaluation does not fully inform development plans as a church school. The work of governors is limited by the lack of support from the other foundation governor. Statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are fully met.

In summary, this school lives out its mission and is in a good place to continue its journey to be outstanding as a church school. Christian foundations are more secure and these will sustain the school into its next phase of development in the changing educational landscape. With 'Love, Laughter and Learning' at its heart, Wrockwardine is set to enrich the lives of all in the school community, now and in the future.

SIAMS report November 2016 Wrockwardine Wood Church of England Junior School, Trench, Telford, TF2 7HG.