



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Woodcocks' Well Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School

Church Street,
Mow Cop,
Stoke-on-Trent,
Cheshire,
ST7 3NQ

Previous SIAS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Chester

Local authority: Cheshire East

Date of inspection: 28 January 2016

Date of last inspection: December 2010

School's unique reference number: 111255

Headteacher: Julie Massen

Inspector's name and number: Anne B. Woodcock (445)

School context

Woodcocks' Well is a popular and growing school serving the village community of Mow Cop on the Cheshire/Staffordshire border. The vast majority of the 114 pupils are of White British heritage and they come from mixed socio-economic backgrounds. The school supports a higher than average number of pupils with additional needs. The number of pupils attracting the pupil premium grant is lower than average. The school's status changed from Voluntary Controlled to Voluntary Aided in September 2013. The headteacher currently works 0.9 in school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Woodcocks' Well Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- The headteacher's purposeful leadership, ably supported by dedicated staff and governors, has secured a distinctly Christian school community in which each individual is valued and nurtured.
- Pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes to life and learning are based on their understanding of Christian love, trust and friendship.
- Strong church links make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual growth and to the school's Christian character.
- Religious education (RE) supports pupils' personal and spiritual development very well.

Areas to improve

- Provide opportunities for pupils to regularly plan and lead aspects of collective worship so that they further develop their understanding of the nature and purpose of Christian worship.
- Extend pupils' understanding of diverse cultures and faiths in RE by providing more first-hand experience using visits and visitors.

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

All members of the school community recognise that the school's Christian distinctiveness has developed significantly following the change of status. The focus on Christian values and Fruits of the Spirit is reflected in displays of pupil work throughout the school. Very strong, nurturing relationships support pupils and their families. Parents value these highly. One parent explained, 'Teachers nurture our children in every way, showing compassion and love for every child.' Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils' understanding of Christian values is reflected in the way in which they treat each other, showing forgiveness, respect and kindness. One Year 6 pupil explained, 'There are a lot of caring people in this school.' Pupils are eager and confident learners. They enjoy learning because they are challenged and well-supported. A Year 5 pupil stated, 'Our teachers make you feel better when you're worried and want what's best for us, so they make learning fun.' Provision for those with additional needs is very effective, enabling all pupils to make good progress from their starting points. The school's strong focus on pupils' emotional well-being ensures that their personal development is consistently promoted. They accept responsibilities willingly, taking pride in their own achievements and those of the school. As a result, they grow in confidence and self-esteem. Pupils' spiritual development is good. They express their ideas creatively and ask challenging questions such as 'does God love me all the time?' and 'is forgiveness always possible?' Effective use is made of the extensive outdoor learning area. Pupils explore the natural world, expressing their ideas through drama, art and prose. They have a growing understanding of their place in God's world and their responsibilities for its care and conservation. Knowing that some of their friends have lost loved ones recently, one boy explained that they raise money for cancer relief charities 'to help more people survive cancer.'

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is a valued feature of the daily life of the school. Pupils enjoy their worship experiences. One Year 5 pupil explained that this is because they are 'usually involved and not just sitting'. Worship is firmly based on Bible teaching, Christian values and the life of Jesus. As a result, pupils have a good knowledge of Bible stories. They talk confidently about the events in Jesus' life celebrated by Christians. The rector supports planning and leads worship regularly in school. Special festival services are held in church. The 'family' services provide valued opportunities for parents to share in their children's work and worship. Pupils' experience of different styles of Christian worship is broad because leaders from other local faith groups, such as the Community Church, regularly lead worship. Pupils enjoy this Bible-based worship. One Year 6 pupil explained, 'It is a fun way of learning about God and his word from Bible stories.' They are engaged and responsive, particularly when helping to act out and read stories and prayers. However, at present pupils have limited opportunities to plan and lead aspects of worship independently. Pupils have a developing understanding of the nature of God. 'We know that God is always there for us. Jesus is the Son of God and he came to teach people God's ways,' explained a Year 6 pupil. Pupils talk confidently about parables Jesus used, explaining that they show people how to treat others. Pupils are given time to reflect and consider their personal response within worship. They know the Lord's Prayer and other traditional prayers used at different times of the day. Pupils' awareness of the purpose of prayer is reflected in those they write for personal and public use. Issues from the previous inspection have been addressed. Planning records are thorough. Monitoring and evaluation includes feedback from staff, governors, pupils and visitors. Records are used effectively to inform future planning and provide for ongoing improvement.

The effectiveness of the religious education (RE) is good

Pupils enjoy and are challenged by RE. 'It makes me think and understand things more. It helps me to develop as a person,' stated a Year 6 pupil. Lessons are extremely well planned and differentiated so that all pupils can access and achieve the learning objectives. Wide ranging and varied activities are used to engage pupils and promote active learning. In one lesson, older pupils used drama, with great effect, to reflect their understanding of Isaiah's relationship with God. A good balance is achieved between learning about and learning from religion. The enquiry-based curriculum challenges pupils to reflect, consider important questions and make a personal response. For example, after discussing Isaiah's relationship with God, pupils considered how they reacted when they failed to follow God's rules. 'We apologise, ask for God's forgiveness and try not to repeat the wrong,' explained one child. Pupils make good progress from their starting points and the standards achieved are in line with those of other core subjects. Pupils' work books, class scrapbooks and RE displays reflect the high quality of work throughout the school. RE is extremely well-led by an experienced and passionate subject leader who is determined to raise standards and achievement. RE has a high profile and is well-resourced. Effective use is made of a range of assessment processes to track pupil progress and inform future learning. Marking identifies next steps and shows children how to improve their work. RE contributes positively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. They know key facts about religions such as Judaism and recognise that they need to know about and respect the beliefs of others. This begins in early years, as demonstrated by a Year 1 pupil. When showing his work he explained, 'This is a Star of David. It's a Jewish symbol.' However, the school recognises that opportunities for children to gain first-hand experience of aspects of the faiths studied will enhance their understanding and knowledge of diversity.

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

The headteacher and governors have, through the change of status, ensured the continued growth and development of all aspects of church school improvement. All members of the school family share and promote the headteacher's Christian vision for the school. This is because pro-active, committed governors strive to engage parents, pupils and the community in further developing the school. Governors have a thorough knowledge of the school through monitoring and other visits. Their findings inform the self-evaluation process. Issues from the previous inspection have been addressed. Evaluations continue to inform school improvement planning, in which church school issues are given high priority. Governors ensure that the needs of all pupils are met through the effective use of additional funding and support. The school's strong focus on children's emotional well-being, personal and SMSC development is reflected in the provision of highly effective additional resources, such as play therapy. RE makes a substantial contribution to the school's Christian distinctiveness because it is extremely well-led and supported. Diocesan training for staff and governors has had a strong impact on all aspects of teaching and leadership. The strategic development and leadership of the school is secure because staff development is well-considered and supported. Links with the church, village and other local faith communities are strong and mutually beneficial. Parents value the growing connections with the church, recognising that the links contribute significantly to the school's Christian character. Recently established links with a school in Japan, together with developing links with communities in Uganda, are being used to support pupils' understanding of global issues. They also extend children's awareness of different cultures and ways of life. The pupil voice is strong. Pupils take responsibility for each other and are proud of the way in which their ideas for improving the school are acted upon. 'This is a happy place but we know we can find ways to make it even better,' stated a member of the ethos committee.

