

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Saint Edward's Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School

Hollow Lane

Cheddleton

Leek

Staffordshire

ST13 7HP

Diocese: Lichfield

Local authority: Staffordshire

Dates of inspection: 30th March 2010

Date of last inspection: 11th October 2006

School's unique reference number: 124241

Headteacher: Mrs Tracy Jackson-Ward

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Rachael Brownhill 656

School context

St. Edward's First School is a thriving school which lies in the heart of the popular village of Cheddleton. It is part of a partnership of linked schools which form a federated pyramid. The school draws from a semi-rural area with the school population reflecting a cross-section of socio-economic backgrounds. The vast majority of learners are White British. The school has an increased number on roll since the last inspection with an additional class and teacher.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Edward's First School as a Church of England school are outstanding

St. Edward's First School is an outstanding church school where the pupils make exceptional spiritual and social progress in a school where they are made to feel special. The progress made is derived from the strong Christian ethos which is immediately apparent. The leadership of the school has created a highly distinctive and effective learning environment where Christian values and teaching are expertly planned into a variety of subject areas in a cross-curricular way.

Established strengths

- A distinctive and highly effective Christian ethos where pupils feel valued and special.
- The effectiveness of Collective Worship through strong links between the church, the school and community.
- The priority given to spiritual development.
- The quality and variety of display that reflects Christian values and events.

Focus for development

- Include governors in evaluating worship/ impact of Christian distinctiveness on a regular basis.
- Celebrate all that is good in this school by extending provision to include an outdoor Christian focus area and reflection opportunities.

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

St. Edward's First School is an outstanding church school where Christian values and character are clearly lived out in the life of the school. This is reflected in the school motto of " Learning and Caring Together". There is a very clear and strong commitment to both the care of the children through living out Christian values and the standards that the pupils achieve. The children in turn value their school, saying that they feel very safe and know who to go to if they have a problem. As a result behaviour is excellent throughout the school with the children recognising the difference between right and wrong and the school working with the support of parents. The school is committed to being 'inclusive', having gained Dyslexia Friendly status and when current building work is complete the school will be fully accessible for the disabled. Superb displays contribute to a vibrant school environment that strongly

encourages spiritual development. Effective links with the community enhance Community Cohesion and promote responsible citizenship. A colourful display linking 'All Things Bright and Beautiful' to activities involving the school, parents and the local community at Cheddleton Open Gardens shows good involvement in the local community. The school has established strong links further afield for example with a school in Botswana. The children take part in a variety of fund-raising activities. These are often child-initiated for a local cause or a global disaster (e.g. Haiti earthquake). Exemplar practice exists in each classroom with a focus area providing high quality artefacts which act as a stimulus for reflection. This begins in the Nursery with a 'Hopes and Dreams Tree', where parents are involved in thinking of the kind of future they would wish for their child. When asked "What is special about a church school", one pupil said "*We've got a part of God in us and we worship a lot*". Christian values as well as a recognition of other faiths is evident throughout the school. Discussion with older pupils showed that they understand that not everyone in the world is a Christian, but that others may have their own faith which is to be respected. An especially meaningful feature is the mosaic archway which leads into the school which contains words such as 'gentleness' and 'faith'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is vitally important to the life of the school, reflecting and promoting key Christian values at a level which is meaningful to the children. The children know that worship time is special and say it makes them feel calm. Worship impacts positively on the children. They talk with enthusiasm about their involvement in worship. One pupil said worship can "*.. effect your behaviour and attitude*". Themes for worship are well-planned and include personal development, character building and the events in the Christian year. Pupils take part enthusiastically in worship. They understand how prayer can help them in their own lives and refer to the Lord's Prayer, which they sing beautifully. The Easter Service observed took place at the church. It was led by the children and well attended by parents. The focus was planned to be a culmination of the "Love is.." theme and was outstanding as it linked God's love and the sacrifice of Jesus which was particularly meaningful in a spiritual way at Easter time. Anglican tradition was demonstrated by the vicar in the lighting and explanation of the significance of the Paschal Candle within the church. A memorial garden occupies a focal area and provides a place of reflection which is significant to all. The school benefits from strong links with St. Edward's Church which is closeby and also has links with the Methodist Church in the village. Local clergy and invited visitors take collective worship which strengthens pupils' spiritual development and provides an insight into other faiths: a development issue from the last inspection. Children show remarkable connections with Christianity with Nursery children explaining a variety of Bible Stories and recalling the school Nativity as well as talking knowledgeably about Jesus on the cross.

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

The very strong leadership of the Headteacher together with the commitment and dedication of staff and governors ensures that the distinctive Christian ethos pervades everything. There is an established clear vision for the school which is inclusive and cohesive and this is shared by all stakeholders. The headteacher knows the school community well and responds appropriately, providing a high standard of pastoral care and support for families. The Foundation governors are fully aware of their role in school self-evaluation and now need to develop ways to measure the impact of worship on the children. A great sense of team work and unity of purpose exists amongst the staff, including the Deputy Headteacher who is to take up training in leadership of church schools. Members of the School Council speak proudly of their important role. They have contributed to the improvement of the environment and they know that any minor disputes amongst pupils will be dealt with effectively. The school is held in very high esteem by parents and the local community who value the Christian status of the school and recognise that the school offers a spiritual dimension to their children's growth and development. To encapsulate this a parent said "*...It (the school) has a sound moral and ethic foundation. It is an all embracing caring environment.*" St. Edward's is a popular first school that achieves much within its community and deserves to have its work recognised as being outstanding.