

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

West Felton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

School Road,
West Felton,
Oswestry,
Shropshire.
SY11 4JR

Diocese: Lichfield;

Local authority: Shropshire;

School Unique Reference Number 123512

Dates of inspection: 15th December 2011;

Date of last inspection: 28th April 2009

Headteacher: Mrs Nicola Maddocks

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Marianne Phillips 586

School context

West Felton C of E (VC) Primary school is a school that is growing in popularity. It has 117 pupils on roll. The school serves the village of West Felton and has very close links with St Michael's Parish Church, which is situated some distance from the school on the other side of the A5. The church has been without an appointed minister for the last 3 years, but despite this the school has maintained its regular services at the church.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of West Felton C of E (VC) Primary school as a Church of England school are outstanding

'Every day is a new day' is the school's motto, which encapsulates the strong Christian values of love, forgiveness and tolerance underpinning this close knit school family. As one child ably noted 'we are all part of a team, I can rely on everyone in the school they are really trustworthy'. This sense of 'team' closely unites the school family as does the Christian witness and strong leadership of the headteacher, who with her staff creates a warm, welcoming ethos, which is appreciated by everyone. These are some of many strengths, that are making a difference to everyone who is a part of this distinctive, caring, Christian school.

Established strengths

- The Christian commitment and dedication of the headteacher and staff and their shared vision for West Felton;
- The 'nurturing' ethos, which supports everyone associated with the school.
- The strong relationships which exist united by shared Christian values and concern for each other;
- The inclusive practices, which overcome barriers to learning.

Focus for development

- Build strong, effective, relationships with the newly appointed ministers and worship leaders from St Michael's, the Baptist church and the 'Churches Together' worker to extend the opportunities for worship and spiritual development;
- Build upon the existing work of the foundation governors, formally engaging them in the monitoring and development of this Church school;

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

West Felton is an explicitly Christian school that is outstanding in the way it lives the Christian values, which permeate all aspects of school life. Parents praise the very good provision that caters for all interests and abilities. One typically said, 'The school welcomes and cares for my children'; another 'I am so glad we placed the children here.. my children are learning to pray to God and to share their worries...they weren't part of a church school before...it is making a difference to us'. The inclusive nature of the school is evident and is helping all children, whatever their needs, to develop very positive attitudes to learning and school. One display labelled 'Aspirations', celebrates the way the school is encouraging all to achieve and to have high expectations for their future lives. Children noted, 'To be part of this school helps us to be a community....all children help each other....we get upset and sad if we see others

sad...learning about Jesus and the Bible gives us reasons to stay together, believe and think positively'. These views are reflected in the way children relate and respect each other. This was witnessed during the discussions with pupils where the older children encouraged the younger ones in their understanding and contributions. During 'Golden Time' older pupils often choose to read and help the younger pupils, particularly those in the pre-school unit. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They are encouraged to be responsible and to have a clear understanding of right and wrong. They enthusiastically share their views that God helps them. 'When I pray to God I pray for help, I want to know He's by me.....we want Him to know we believe in Him'....we want to thank God and Jesus for all the things that are happening to us...we want Him to help others that are not as lucky as us'. The School Council is very active and accepts responsibility very seriously. The school has plans to further extend the leadership role of the children by creating 'learning circles' building on from the work of the School Council. This is an excellent idea that reflects the headteacher's commitment to 'involve and engage all pupils and to do the best for each and every individual'. The curriculum is lively and challenging and many vibrant displays brighten and enhance the learning environment. All staff run a club. The children are encouraged to be prayerful and reflective in many ways. The governors sometimes select prayers from the 'prayerful hands tree' to start their meetings. In this way the children's spirituality is growing and impacting upon other aspects of school life.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The worship observed, led by the minister, was good. One of a number of outstanding features required the pupils to make a personal response to God being '*Nowhere*' or '*Now here*'. All pupils enthusiastically chose the latter option and responded respectfully during the time of prayer and reflection. Most pupils were engaged and their contributions indicated a depth in knowledge. Pupils' attitudes to worship are very good with the majority of them saying they enjoy worship and feel that '*it is fun*'. The School Council sometimes takes a lead during the services. The school has plans to offer the opportunity for classes to lead worship. All children questioned were able to talk personally about their prayerful experiences and the way '*God connects with them*'. There is no school hall and so one of the larger classrooms is used for worship. There are reflection areas in each classroom and these with the '*worry boxes*' encourage children to pray and share their thoughts and concerns. The minister of St Michael's and the Methodist minister have only recently been appointed. They, with the 'Churches Together' worker, share the Tuesday rota for leading worship at the school. Developing the work of these Christian leaders and building upon the existing commitment of the foundation governors, is a priority for the future development of this church school. There is a Christian club, run by one of the teaching assistants, that is very popular with the children and is positively contributing to the spiritual growth of those that attend. Parents enjoy the experiences of worship in church. There is also a very active 'Friends of the School' that raises money for many things including transport to church and other visits. The relationships that are fostered make a difference to lives of the parents and their children, ensuring community cohesion is very good.

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

The Christian leadership of the headteacher is both strong and effective and she is widely respected. Her listening, caring attitude unites school, church and community. Her influence and the support that is given through the West Felton '*team*' creates effective cohesive links, evidenced by the parental questionnaires and the opinions gathered from all the stakeholders. The school's Christian vision is widely shared and is fostered through the work of the staff, foundation governors and the governors' '*Worship Committee*'. The new minister of St Michael's is keen and enthusiastic to be involved both as a governor and one of Christian leaders of the school. The school supports many charities and has very well established national and global community links. There are plans to extend these links to include visits to the schools in Britain, so that close relationships and understanding of the different lives and cultures of the pupils can be fostered through friendship. The families and community appreciate the work of this outstanding school and the difference it is making to their lives and the lives of their children.