



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools
Under Section 48 of the Education Act 2006

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LEICESTERSHIRE LOCAL AUTHORITY

Witherley Church of England Primary School
Church Road
Witherley
Atherstone
Warwickshire
CV9 3NA

Inspection Date: 16th March 2009

Section 48 Inspector: Dr David Gentle



SIAS Report Form

Name and address of school:	Witherley Church of England Primary School Church Road Witherley Atherstone Warwickshire CV9 3NA
Type of school	Primary
Status:	Voluntary Controlled
Diocese:	Leicester
Local Authority:	Leicestershire
Dates of inspection:	16 th March 2009
Date of last inspection:	26 th and 27 th January 2006
School's Unique Ref. No:	120172
Name of Head teacher;	Mrs Alison Ward
Inspector's name (with N.S. No):	Dr David Gentle (209)
School context	
<p>Witherley Church of England Primary School is a very small voluntary controlled school of 70 pupils, almost all being White British. Pupils are drawn from the village of Witherley and also further afield, including Atherstone. Approximately one-quarter of the pupils come from families who are practising Christians. The previous rural dean and his wife have provided the main link with the church.</p>	
The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Witherley CE Primary School as a Church of England school are good	
<p>Pupils are encouraged and supported well as individuals. The school's distinctiveness as a Church of England school is based on the strong provision for collective worship and frequent daily opportunities for prayer. The school is seen as an integral part of the local community with clear links to the church. This is an improving school.</p>	
Established strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is very good provision for collective worship that makes a significant contribution to the distinctive character of the school.• There are very good opportunities for prayer and reflection.• Pupils develop well socially and morally within an environment where they are made to feel valued and special.• The school has good links with all stakeholders, the local church and the community.	
Focus for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop structured systems of self-evaluation and improvement that are integral to whole school planning and involve foundation governors.• Ensure that written policies and publications are grounded explicitly in the Christian faith, beliefs and values.• Implement systems that evaluate spiritual development.• Extend opportunities for pupils to learn more about other cultures.	

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

The school provides a good learning environment with positive and supportive relationships. Teachers are regarded as 'nice, friendly and helpful', giving good support for individuals, including those with particular needs. Pupils are able to identify and live by Christian values, particularly through making strong links with Bible stories in collective worship and religious education. Spiritual development is appropriate, although the school does not have a comprehensive policy in place, an issue from the previous inspection. Pupils derive considerable encouragement from the extensive reward systems including prizes, merits, headteacher's award and the 'star pupil' award, often enhanced by the presence of their parents. They derive pride and encouragement from displays of their good work, including sporting achievements. Parents describe how their children gain enjoyment and motivation from the wide range of extra-curricular activities. There are excellent displays across the whole school, providing a stimulating learning environment. Pupils are aware of environmental issues through strong and overt strategies on issues such as recycling and transport. Christian displays and artefacts in every classroom provide a clear focal point for prayer and reflection. Pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of other religions, particularly through religious education. There are some activities, such as Indian dancing and recognition of Chinese New Year, to promote cultural awareness but with varied impact.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

All members of the school community regard collective worship as an important feature of the school. The very effective co-ordinator for collective worship has introduced clear policies, excellent planning and good recording systems, all issues arising from the last inspection. The vast majority of pupils are fully engaged in the daily whole school worship. Their good behaviour shows respect and reverence for the occasion. A satisfactory environment is created in the new hall using appropriate artefacts, although the school recognises that some practical issues remain. Pupils can speak about how they relate their behaviour and feelings to messages from the Bible. Engagement in singing is reasonable and gains strength when backed with music. Active participation has improved since the previous inspection, although the school recognises the need to develop this further. Prayer is an important and regular feature. Pupils have good knowledge of the Lord's Prayer, frequent engagement in the school prayer, and the opportunity to contribute personal prayers. The centrality of prayer is emphasised by daily grace and class prayer at the end of the day, always within an appropriately structured environment. Pupils understand that prayer is a means of 'talking to God' although the majority of them engage in reflection rather than prayer and do not tend to use prayer beyond school. Pupils understand the nature and character of Jesus and have appropriate knowledge, though little experience, of some practices such as the Eucharist. The impact of worship is enhanced by the celebration of major Christian events in the local church, attended by many parents, and the regular contribution of a church representative to collective worship.

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

The school has shown considerable improvement through the leadership of the headteacher, the commitment and dedication of the collective worship and RE co-ordinator and the support of all staff. Significant developments that have good impact on pupils are led and monitored through key individuals. Self-evaluation and development planning is good at individual teacher level but is not sufficiently embedded in the whole school cycle for improvement. Foundation governors have a strong commitment to the development of the school's Christian character. However, whilst effectively monitoring provision such as collective worship through observation and informal discussion, their considerable capacity to contribute to improvement is underused. The school's special ethos is generally understated in school policies and publications, several of which are in need of review. Strong links with the local church and other village organisations, together with work to support charities and promote environmentally friendly policies, are indicators of the good contribution to community cohesion. Parents have a high opinion of the school and speak of the very good communication, particularly citing easy access to the headteacher. They are fully informed about their child's progress and have no significant concerns. The school council is very active, involving pupils well in fund-raising and health issues. All pupils are effectively encouraged to bring any issues to the attention of the school council through the 'Huff and Puff' box. A particularly effective development is the involvement of pupils in discussion about factors that promote their engagement in teaching and learning.