



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### Woodside Church of England Primary School (inspected as Voluntary Aided)

Maypole Lane  
Grendon  
Atherstone  
Warwickshire  
CV9 2BS

**Previous SIAS grade: Good (VC)**

**Current inspection grade: Outstanding (VA/AC)**

**Diocese: Birmingham**

Local authority: N/A

Date of inspection: 14 June 2016

Date of last inspection: 16 February 2011

School's unique reference number: 140153

Headteacher: Awen Simpson

Priest in Charge: Revd. Roger Chamberlain

Inspector's name and number: Allyson Taylor 768

#### School context

Woodside Church of England Primary School is a rural school with 197 children on roll. The school serves an area of relatively low deprivation, although the number of children with more complex learning and personal needs is significantly above national figures. Almost all learners are of white British background. Ofsted recently judged the school to continue to be good. In 2013 the school joined with three other neighbouring church schools to form the Heartwood Church of England multi-academy trust. A privately run pre-school is on site.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Woodside as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The Christian values of the school have a significant impact on the academic achievement, personal development and well-being of all members of the school community.
- Clarity of shared vision is based on the life and teaching of Jesus, which ensures that each child and adult is nurtured as precious to God.
- The commitment of all leaders, seen in the new ethos statement, which enables Woodside, within the family of the trust, to go forward while strengthening the Christian character.

#### Areas to improve

- Increase the depth of study of different faiths in religious education (RE) so learners have a deeper understanding of faiths and life in modern Britain.
- Extend opportunities for learners to plan and lead acts of worship in school and church to develop the use of Anglican traditions and so enhance spiritual development.
- Establish a definition of what spirituality means at Woodside so staff are more confident to plan for spiritual development across the curriculum.

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

The Christian character of Woodside is lived out through its chosen values. 'Love, respect, worship, forgiveness, hope and challenging injustice' were chosen after wide consultation and are pivotal to how children feel secure and so are able to learn. Children are aware that examples of their values are found in the Bible but apply to everyone, whether Christian or not. The headteacher says the values are 'living words.' As such, they support the excellent academic progress and personal development of all the ages. Standards against national tests are high and the chosen Christian values help remove barriers to learning. Children who struggle to access learning are guided sensitively by skilled staff who understand their needs. The focus on nurturing those with additional learning, social or medical needs is transformational. The well-being and learning of individuals is a priority and members of staff go the second mile in caring for children who present with challenging behaviour. The Christian character and explicit Christian values enable staff to 'not give up on anyone' and so avoid exclusion. As a direct result of the good relationships with families, attendance for more vulnerable children has improved. Relationships are built on mutual trust and respect. All staff, teaching and support staff, model expected behaviour and attitudes to learning. Consequently, behaviour is generally positive and children are confident to sort out friendship issues using the values, particularly challenging injustice, as a guide. Through RE and the wider curriculum, children have some understanding of the main features of other faiths and cultures. RE, therefore, makes an important contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. The school has recently begun to explore what it means by 'spirituality' and staff's understanding of how to plan for opportunities for spiritual development is developing. Above all, the strong Christian character cements relationships across the ages. There is a genuine sense of this school living out the great commandments to love God and love each other. Woodside is a dynamic Christian community in action.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

Collective worship secures the religious foundation of the school and shapes how its values are understood within a Christian context. Whole school, daily worship unifies the school community. It is securely based on the Bible, life and teaching of Jesus. His teaching is seen as a model for how children work and grow together in love, by showing kindness to others. For example, one child said 'worship makes my thoughts clearer and prayer helps us think about God.' Exploring how to help others prompts children to support charities both in Britain and overseas. Special visitors, like the Bishop of Malawi, lead worship and enable children to understand that Christianity is a world faith. Children are familiar with a range of Anglican traditions, blessings and prayers. The use of symbols on the worship table helps children understand their significance. Learners explain how the dove is a symbol of peace and helps them to feel calm. The recent focus on exploring the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit means children of all ages have an impressive understanding of this complex concept. Learners in the worship committee support the coordinator to plan and lead aspects of worship. Feedback on worship has increased children's active participation and this is set to continue as children gain confidence in sharing prayers and supporting how worship is organised. The 'Open the Book' worship is a highlight of the week; one child explained that 'they make it easier to understand the stories.' The weekly pattern of worship has a deeply felt impact on adults as well as children. Several parents respond to the welcome to attend acts of worship three times each week, and those who do say, by joining in with prayers that they feel closer to faith. The school celebrates the main Christian festivals in church and these acts of worship are very popular with staff, children and family members. One parent described the services as bringing the whole village community together. Prayer and time for reflection are integral to worship and feature at lunch and the end of the school day. Children embrace the practice of leaving their prayers in a wooden prayer box. They appreciate that box is taken to church and their prayers placed on the altar during Sunday services. This demonstrates how the school and church unite in providing for spiritual growth.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

RE is based on the locally agreed syllabus and intended to encourage reflection on the school's Christian values. Learners achieve well and enjoy the subject, particularly when it is linked to other areas, like Art, creative writing and drama. Children have a good knowledge of Christianity and talk with confidence of a range of Bible stories. Lessons are planned to ensure progression on themes like the main Christian festivals. As a result, older learners have a mature understanding of the Christmas and Easter stories. Enquiry and reflection are well developed so learners ask searching questions and relate themes studied to their own experiences. The subject has a high profile and the quality of teaching and learning is mostly good. Children's work, year group RE books and curriculum plans show that learners have a breadth of study of several faiths but a more superficial knowledge of faiths other than Christianity. Adults support those who need it, enabling pupils of different abilities to engage in activities and make progress. Marking and feedback in RE shows some staff commenting on the RE learning as well as aspects of punctuation, spelling and grammar. This is not yet consistent across all classes. Children explore a wide range of festivals and customs from different faiths. As a result, RE, supports learners' understanding of global diversity. Teachers record achievement in RE each term and the RE coordinator uses this to ensure that standards are in line with other subjects. There are the same high expectations of effort and presentation in RE as in English and topic work. The RE coordinator is currently the headteacher and this shows the high status of RE in the curriculum. She monitors teaching and learning through observing teaching and scrutiny of work, although evaluations do not inform whole school improvement plans.

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

The compassionate leadership of the headteacher is key to the success of Woodside as a church school. She leads by example and her concern for everyone's welfare is greatly appreciated by staff, governors, children and parents. Her devotion to meeting individual needs, and to supporting staff to do so, shines. Under her leadership the Christian character of Woodside has developed since the last inspection. All leaders, however, consistently live out and promote the chosen values. As one said 'this is what we do, it is not just box-ticking.' The considered and carefully- researched ethos statement shows how every child in each school will be nurtured as precious to God. The Christian identity is visible everywhere in displays and artefacts. Great care is taken to ensure the extensive learning environment is welcoming and allows children to play and learn in security. Leaders, at governor and trust level, know the school well and are mindful of the need to develop the Christian character, RE and worship. Indeed, sustaining the Christian ethos was the main driver during the academy conversion in 2013. Leaders ensure that the whole curriculum is rich and underpinned by the Christian vision and values. As a result, all curriculum subjects are valued, all gifts and talents appreciated, not just achievement in test subjects. Link governors visit each term and monitor key areas of school, meeting children and talking with staff about progress and areas they wish to develop. While the learning improvement plan focuses on academic subjects, leaders have a vision for how the school will develop as a distinctive church school. Their plans to restructure leadership across the four schools demonstrates their commitment to develop future leaders of church schools. Governors also plan to update the website to more fully reflect the strong Christian character of the school seen in their new motto 'inquisitive minds, caring hands, praying hearts.' Partnerships with families are exceptionally positive and parents appreciate how the school embraces each child and engages positively with them. Leaders also maintain strong links with the parish churches and village community. For example, activities in school support local events like the annual Advent lantern walk. Relationships across the trust schools are positive and there is a sense of 'belonging to something bigger,' including being part of the wider diocesan family of schools. The school is blessed in the commitment of the priest in charge and dynamic chair of governors. Their involvement at a strategic and day to day level means there is a harmonious spirit enhancing the lives of all those who work and learn at Woodside. Leaders are the secure roots of a church school which is growing and flourishing in both learning and faith.

