



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### Holywell Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Mill Way  
Needingworth  
St Ives  
PE27 4TF

**Diocese: Ely**

Local authority: Cambridgeshire  
Dates of inspection: 3 December 2009  
Date of last inspection: 5 July 2007  
School's unique reference number: 110817  
Headteacher: Mrs Sue Vickery  
Inspector's name and number: Mrs Marion Betts 220

#### School context

Holywell school is a smaller than average primary school for pupils 4 to 11 years. It is situated at the centre of a thriving village community, serving Holywell and Needingworth. The percentage of pupils eligible to claim free school meals is significantly below the national average. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and almost all speak English as their first language.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Holywell as a Church of England school are good.**

Christian values are embedded in school life, and have a very strong positive influence on the high quality of staff, pupil relationships and well-being. Pupils are valued as individuals and flourish in their personal development. The school's links with the local Christian community is strong and many church members contribute to school life and activities. Christian displays are evident around the school.

#### Established strengths

- Very good relationships between all staff members.
- The high emphasis on the care and pastoral support of each child's needs.
- The leadership of the headteacher and staff in promoting the church school ethos.
- The strong links between school and the church.

#### Focus for development

- Ensure pupils are more involved in planning and leading worship.
- Devise ways for foundation governors to monitor and evaluate the church school ethos and collective worship by analysing the views of pupils, parents, teachers and visitors.

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

Pupils at Holywell are proud of their school, praising the care of the staff who make lessons fun, listen to them and help with their problems. They enjoy their school life and feel safe and secure. They value the opportunities given them to undertake responsibilities such as being part of the School Council where the ideas and opinions of all pupils are sought and acted upon. They appreciate the many curriculum enrichment activities provided.

Relationships and respect between all staff and children are very good and demonstrate the school's Christian context. The school is characterised by good teamwork, praise used effectively and a sense of positive well-being. Pupils' successes and achievements are regularly celebrated. Pupils behave well and develop positive attitudes to learning. The pastoral care of the school is good with each child's needs known and catered for; one example being the provision of small group activities at dinnertime. Parents are very happy with their children's care and experiences within school.

Pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Each child is encouraged to develop in all areas to their full potential. One example of this is the pupils' involvement with the school allotment and growing their own food. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong, and a strong concern for the needs of others demonstrated by money raised for a variety of charities including a school in Uganda. The school environment encourages pupils' spiritual development well by attractive inter-active displays, many with a Christian theme, supported by thought provoking questions. Outside areas of quiet are distinct from activity areas. The school promotes a warm, welcoming and friendly atmosphere.

**The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.**

Collective worship is important in the life of the school, demonstrated by the appreciation of pupils and staff for this whole school beginning of the day community time. Worship has a positive impact on pupils and promotes well their spiritual and moral development. During worship pupils listen well and are given a quiet reflective time to allow them to apply their learning to their own lives and experience.

Collective worship effectively includes singing of hymns, teaching, story, music and prayer with visual symbols and presentation to aid understanding.

Pupils enjoy worship, especially when led by a range of Christian leaders. They particularly mentioned the Open the Book team, but worship is also led by staff, the priest-in-charge, the Bishop's Visitor and the GenR8 group. Pupils are encouraged to write their own prayers which are used in worship. At present these are decorated and displayed on a prayer Christmas tree. Pupils have some opportunities to participate in delivering worship but would appreciate being given more responsibility for both planning and leading worship. Pupils have some understanding of the range of styles and purposes of prayer.

The school leadership at present monitors the impact of worship and pupils' views are sought. Foundation governors are not able to attend regularly during the school day but are beginning to think of ways in which they would be able to monitor and evaluate the impact of collective worship through the views of those who are present.

Worship develops very well pupils' understanding of the Anglican faith. The worship experience is broadened by Christian visitors. Pupils know the Lord's Prayer and Grace is said at lunchtime. Attractive advent calendars are currently displayed in each class. The main Christian festivals and other special services are celebrated within the church building. Parents and parishioners are invited to join with these and attendance is good.

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

The headteacher and staff provide very effective leadership which makes a powerful contribution to the Christian vision of the school. They personally set the tone of Christian care and concern for others throughout the school. The governors support this vision and

they, together with parents, staff and pupils, contributed to the renewing of the School Vision statement and to redefining the Christian values which underpin it. The staff are strongly committed and implements the school's expectations of their roles in this Christian community. They feel appreciated for their work by the school leadership and are very supportive of each other both professionally and personally. The church school status is explicit in signs, letter headings, and school badge. The Foundation Governors do not at present formally monitor the distinctiveness of the school as a church school. This was an issue for development in the last diocesan inspection. The self-evaluation of the school is accurate and comprehensive with appropriate areas for development noted.

Links with the local church are strong. The priest-in-charge visits regularly and the Foundation Governors support the school well. Pupils work together with parishioners to display their work in the church as a focus at festival times. The church youth group uses the school premises. Links with parents are good and their ideas are regularly sought. Parents particularly mention the approachability of the headteacher and all staff who listen to and act on their concerns. The school has very effective links with the pre-school which uses an integral part of the school building. The school supports local community and village events..

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