

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Wenlock Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior School

Beaconsfield Road, Luton LU2 0RW

Diocese: St Albans

Local Authority:	Luton
Date of inspection:	29 March 2011
Date of last inspection:	11 March 2008
School's unique reference number:	109633
Headteacher:	Mrs Barbara Campbell
Inspector's name and number:	Mrs Lizzie McWhirter MA 244

School context

Wenlock is unique since it is the only Church of England school in the town of Luton. It is larger than average primary schools. Half its 306 pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly Asian, Caribbean or African. It provides a friendly, welcoming and inclusive community underpinned by Christian values.

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

Wenlock Junior is a good church school. At its heart everyone models 'learning and growing together in the love of God'. The whole school community is valued and all strive to achieve their best.

Established strengths

- The positive attitudes of the pupils who are proud of their school and love learning
- The pastoral care given to pupils and their families
- The quality of experiences given to pupils in collective worship and religious education [RE], supporting their spiritual development

Focus for development

- Provide reflection journals for every class, thus putting in place a systematic way of engaging pupils and governors in the evaluation of collective worship
- Involve pupils in planning and developing spaces for reflection, both inside and outside the classroom
- Embed the evaluation of the school as a church school, involving all members of the school community

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

Wenlock Junior successfully promotes a positive learning environment where children are cared for as a result of the inclusive Christian ethos. Within this cohesive community, Christian values and teachings underpin policy and practice, relationships are nurtured and all value the strong sense of belonging which exists. Pupils say they value their teachers and their friends. Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to become school buddies as well as peer mentors, working with younger pupils, which is integral to the caring, Christian ethos at Wenlock. The school is seen to value the widest range of achievement and pupils feel able to make a positive contribution. They enjoy giving to charity through which they experience the Christian values of service and gratitude. Their sense of global awareness is supported through the creative curriculum, worship, space for reflection and links with local churches. Pupils welcome being involved in the planning and development of reflection areas, both inside and outside the classroom, thus supporting their spiritual development. Their ideas include, 'having a bean bag and book with a pen to the side to sit down and write, possibly in the book corner as it is a really quiet place'. They describe the crucifix in the hall as 'moving', albeit a 'strange work of art' alongside their vibrant pictures, captured in the diocesan magazine, 'See Round'. One of these they especially enjoy, that of 'Christ carrying his cross up a hill'. In these ways the school environment supports pupils' spiritual development. Pupils also comment on being 'inspired by all that the teachers do' and some aspire to becoming teachers themselves.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship clearly engages the pupils and is making a real impact on their lives. Well planned and delivered collective worship is central to this church school where links with the parish churches of St Anne's and St Christopher's, through the rector, as well as St Mary's in the town centre ensures that the Anglican tradition is upheld. Visits to St Albans Abbey for Bishop Alan's installation and the Bishop's visit to the school help pupils understand they are part of larger worshipping diocesan family. They enjoy class prayers as well as the rector leading worship and sharing different stories from The Bible. They are able to make the link between these stories and their own lives. A good example of this is the story of Moses from which they learnt to 'never give up and always try'. Pupils are keen to be more involved in the planning and leading of worship, as well as contributing their own thoughts and reflections. The school has rightly identified this as an area for development, considering the use of reflection journals to capture pupil thoughts for governors and staff to read and act upon. Pupils welcome this as 'a good idea, as they can read all of it instead of telling a little bit to them'. Pupils enjoy going to church for worship as 'lots of people go there to pray'.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Pupil attitudes are the strength in this subject which enables them to work positively with interest and in a spirit of co-operation. Most pupils find RE fun and exciting and in their own words, 'get pretty excited'. They welcome more visits to places of worship for faiths other than Christianity as this would enable them 'to enjoy and understand better'. As one pupil put it, 'we are a multi-cultural school and accept everyone, every religion, colour, whoever you are. We make new friends and find out about their religion'. The school follows the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus with supplementary material from the diocese. Teaching and learning is consistently good. Monitoring of planning and evidence of progress through assessment tasks takes place as well as lesson observations in RE so that achievement in RE can be identified and comparisons made with other core subjects. Pupils are knowledgeable about Christianity and can relate well to The Passion Narrative. They also learn from other faith traditions such as Buddhism, thinking deeply about the meaning of life and forgiveness. Such experiences ensure RE contributes to pupils' spiritual development.

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

The headteacher, together with governors and staff share a developing vision for the whole school community. Parents find staff approachable and value the caring community where they too feel at home and included. As one parent put it, the school 'listens to what is needed and takes it on board'. As a result the pupils engage with Christian values and have the opportunity to enjoy a wide range of achievement provided through extra-curricular activities. The parent body especially speak of the pastoral care of the school making a real difference in their own lives and the lives of their families. Pupils too are happy in this school where they are equipped with the tools for prayer and worship. Foundation governors are making a difference through their involvement and are open to new ways of moving the school forward in terms of their monitoring and evaluative role. Progress has been made and the school now seeks to embed its Christian distinctiveness, involving the whole school community. In these ways the school addresses areas from the previous inspection, systematically looking at values every year. The school also receives and welcomes support from the diocese in terms of a wider partnership in valuing their Christian vision and mission.