

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### St Lawrence Church of England Voluntary Aided Lower School

Manor Lane  
Wymington  
Rushden  
Northamptonshire  
NN10 9LL

#### Diocese: St Albans

Local Authority:	Bedfordshire
Date of inspection:	14 July 2011
Date of last inspection:	28 February 2008
School's unique reference number:	109628
Headteacher:	Mrs Gilly Donald
Inspector's name and number:	Mrs Lizzie McWhirter MA 244

#### School context

St Lawrence Voluntary Aided Lower School serves the village of Wymington and nearby Rushden. Pupils are almost all from a White British background. The school is the recipient of the national Healthy Schools Award. The headteacher has been in post since September 2010.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Lawrence as a Church of England school are good.

This is a good church school where pupils are given experiences to support their Christian pilgrimage. Pupils are proud of their school. It is a place where learning and teaching is inclusive, and where all are welcomed and encouraged to achieve their full potential.

#### Established strengths

- The headteacher's leadership and direction for the school, supported by the whole school community
- The strong sense of family which exists
- The pupils' love of learning seen especially in collective worship and religious education[RE]

#### Focus for development

- Engage pupils and governors in the further development of evaluation of collective worship
- Embed the monitoring, evaluation and assessment of RE
- Involve all the governing body in a systematic evaluation of church school ethos

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

Children are at the heart of this caring community which provides a very positive learning environment. Pupils are treated as individuals and are confident and happy. Pupils say they value the teachers as well as their friends. Parents are supportive of this school and are willing to go the extra mile helping at and attending events. They speak of the school community as 'the big family' which has grown closer this last year, underpinned by honesty. They say all staff are approachable and appreciate the work of the new headteacher and teaching staff. The school celebrates a wide range of academic, musical and sporting achievement effectively in school, including lunchtime clubs. Reflection areas in classrooms and in the entrance hall promote Christian values, supporting pupils' spiritual development. The school staff and governors recently spent a day looking at Christian character, supported by the diocese, resulting in a better understanding of values education, enabling them to identify a positive way forward for everyone to work together.

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

Worship is central to this church school where links with its parish church, through the parish lay worker ensures the Anglican tradition is upheld, enabling pupils to encounter Jesus. Pupils especially enjoy singing and going to St Lawrence Church for services throughout the church year, regarding it as 'a holy place'. Visits to St Alban's Abbey help pupils understand they are part of a larger, worshipping diocesan family. Pupils are keen to be involved in worship through drama, and are keen to contribute their own thoughts and reflections. Pupils welcome the use of reflection journals to capture their thoughts on collective worship to be shared with governors. Pupils acknowledge the importance of prayer, saying as the smoke rises from a candle, 'we're here God, receive our message'. They know the importance of praying for forgiveness in The Lord's Prayer, recognising this as 'stop thinking about it and be friends again'. Pupils can articulate the 'Value of the Month' such as courage as well as Christian concepts such as Trinity, describing this as 'a triangle of Father, Son and Holy Spirit', thus contributing to their spiritual development.

**The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory.**

The school sees the importance of lesson observations and monitoring and assessment in RE so that achievement in RE can be identified. This is still in its early stages and the impact of this work has not yet been fully realised. Teaching and learning is at least good and sometimes satisfactory. Good RE is seen when pupils engage enthusiastically, recognising their new learning and achievement, supporting their spiritual development. As one pupil said, 'I seek to improve my work and think about questions over days and try to answer the questions in my work'. The pupils see this important subject as exciting and feel safe to discuss their own beliefs about God. One pupil said, 'it is my best subject as I like learning about Jesus, God and the saints. Pupils know well the story of their school and church's patron saint, St Lawrence and are able to reflect on images of Jesus. Pupils respect the faith of their friends at school. They recognise the importance of prayer in faith and understand the different ways that Muslims and Christians pray, saying that 'in mosques Muslims kneel on the carpet and pray to God'. They welcome visits to other places of worship and meeting with people of faith.

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

Much has been achieved in a year with the new direction and involvement of the headteacher, together with staff and governors, who share a developing vision for the whole school community. There is an excellent partnership between the school and the parish church of St Lawrence which parents support and value in this community. The parish lay worker is also the chair of governors and is a regular and welcome visitor to school. Pupils are clear that St Lawrence is a church school and are equipped with the tools for prayer and worship. Foundation governors seek to make a difference through their active involvement, and are open to new ways of taking the school forward, especially in their monitoring role. The school has identified clear areas for development and governors acknowledge there is work to be done. The focus on Church school ethos and values is in its infancy but there is great impetus and renewed energy and vision to accomplish this, taking everyone on board. There are plans for the school to feature in the parish magazine 'The Bridge' and pupils work is displayed in church so that church and school links are seen and valued. The school values support from the diocese so that the school's Anglican foundation can be upheld by all.

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