

St Luke's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Leek Road
Endon
Stoke-on-Trent
ST9 9EB

Diocese: Lichfield

Local authority: Staffordshire
Dates of inspection: 12th December 2011
Date of last inspection: 1st May 2007
School's unique reference number: 292933
Headteacher: Mrs Joanne Kirkham
Inspector's name and number: Helen Gilbert 633

School context

St Luke's Church of England VC Primary School is a one-form entry school serving the village of Endon and its surrounding area, just outside Leek. Almost all pupils are of white British heritage and the proportion eligible for free school meals and with special educational needs and / or disabilities is below average. A new deputy was appointed at Easter 2011 and a new head teacher joined the school in September 2011. The church is half a mile from the school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Luke's as a Church of England school are good

Christian values are at the heart of all the work of St Luke's school. These are clearly articulated by the head teacher, deputy head and governors and are well recognised by pupils and parents. Pupils know that everyone in the school is valued and accepted by God and by each other and as a result they demonstrate a high level of respect, tolerance and mutual support. The support provided by the vicar and governors is very strong indeed.

Established strengths

- The strong Christian leadership and vision of the head, deputy, governors and vicar.
- The care and nurture of the pupils, which ensures they are confident, enthusiastic and articulate learners.
- The school environment that reflects and strengthens the clear Christian ethos.

Focus for development

- Develop the confidence and expertise of all staff to lead worship and support the spiritual development of pupils.
- Involve the Foundation Governors in evaluating the impact of worship and of the school's distinctive Christian ethos.
- Strengthen the links between the school and the parish.

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

The school environment strongly affirms the Christian character of the school. The mission statement, motto, displays, prayer and worship focus areas are all continual reminders that this is a church school that holds Christian values at the centre of all that it does. Children are very well cared for and treated with respect and as a result they are confident and to express their thoughts and opinions in the secure knowledge that they will be respected, by adults and children alike. Pupils listen to each other and recognise the importance of understanding and tolerance. This is recognised and valued by parents who say that the school supports their children very well. One parent said *'My child loves coming to school,'* and another that *'everyone is so approachable here.'* They report that communication is good and speak very positively about the recent changes in leadership. Children's understanding of Christian values is fostered through worship and the well structured programme for religious education (R.E.) which both make an important contribution to the personal, social and spiritual development of pupils. Children believe that being in a church school is important; one child said *'it is like your family but bigger,'* and another that *'we pray, friends look after you, it's friendly and anybody is accepted.'* By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils achieve well but the school has identified the fact that progress is not consistent in all year groups and is taking steps to ensure that all children achieve all that they are

capable at every stage of their school life. Children view service as a natural part of contributing to the school and the wider community and value responsibilities such as the school council, buddies and eco-warriors. They also have numerous opportunities to fundraise for charities like Barnardo's, the Poppy Appeal, Children in Need, Chernobyl Children, Compassion and Ben's Box. However, whilst pupils recall some of these activities they do not demonstrate an understanding of the work these charities do nor link this with Jesus' teaching to love our neighbour, and this is an area for development. Community cohesion is satisfactory and the school has identified the need to provide more opportunities to learn about other cultures and beliefs both nationally and globally.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship holds a central place in the life of the school. Children respond very positively and most pupils say they enjoy worship and leading special acts of worship. They believe worship influences attitudes, behaviour and relationships throughout the school. Worship themes are planned for the year and incorporate the key events of the Christian calendar with PSHE (personal, social, and health education) themes and this has a very good impact on the personal and social development of pupils. The act of worship on the day of the inspection was entirely led and presented by the pupils in Year 6 and was lively, engaging and enthusiastic, incorporating singing, narrative, drama and prayer. Pupils showed a good understanding of the background of Mary who was chosen by God because she was not educated, rich or important but had a pure heart. They declared that *'this message is living all through our school.'* The vicar makes a strong contribution to worship and understands the importance of making worship both fun and inspirational for children. Pupils speak very positively of the times when he leads worship. Prayer is seen as a key element and pupils can talk about reasons for talking to God – to say thank you, to say sorry, to ask for help for themselves and to ask for help for others. There are prayer baskets in the hall and some classrooms. Pupils value these although they were uncertain who read all the prayers. However, one child gave the assurance that *"it's ok because God reads them."* Children hear a good range of Bible stories and the 'Jesse tree' is helping them to understand the events of the life of Jesus. They can talk about the morals in the parables, which are currently displayed around the hall. The content of different parts of the Bible such as in the old and new testaments, the gospels, and St Luke's writings are less well understood, even by older pupils. The impact of worship on the spiritual development of pupils is good, although more opportunities are needed for quiet reflection. The new head teacher has identified the need to provide training and support that will enable all staff to lead worship, particularly class worship, in order to enhance this further, along with the creation of quiet areas in the school and the grounds. Records of worship are kept but the head and deputy have identified the need to involve the foundation governors in developing a process for evaluating the impact of worship on the attitudes and the spiritual development of pupils.

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

Leadership and management are good at all levels. The new head and deputy have formed a strong team with clear vision and determination, which is already having an impact on pupils. They are well supported by staff, governors and parents and have identified clear priorities for improving the quality of the curriculum and the consistency of teaching throughout the school. Governors place the needs of children at the heart of the work of St Luke's and have shown a clear understanding of the needs of the school throughout the process of appointing a new leadership team. As one governor said, *'every child really does matter here.'* They are proud of St Luke's, are excellent advocates for the school and are keen to be involved more closely in evaluating its impact as a church school. Governors are very committed to strengthening the links between church and school and have set this as one of the head teacher's performance management objectives. The head teacher is providing a strong lead for the development of collective worship; she has identified the need to further enhance pupils' spiritual development through class worship and the creation of quiet areas. Strong leadership by the RE Co-ordinator enhances children's understanding of Christian teaching and the Christian character of the school. Members of the school council and eco-warriors take pride in their respective roles and are confident that they can make a difference to the school.

