

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Frodsham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

School Lane
Overton
Frodsham
Cheshire
WA6 6AF

Diocese:

Chester

Local authority: Cheshire West & Chester
Dates of inspection: 23rd November 2012
Date of last inspection: 4th October 2007
School's unique reference number: 111247
Headteacher: Miss Gail Fullbrook
Inspector's name & number: Mrs Ruth Wall National Society No. 548

School context

Frodsham CE School is an average sized voluntary controlled primary school. Children are predominantly of white British heritage. The proportion of children with special educational needs is well below the national average, as is the proportion of children entitled to claim free school meals. The school has achieved the International School Award for the third time in succession.

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

Frodsham CE School has been successful in establishing a clear Christian vision and developing a distinctive Christian character. All children and staff are valued and encouraged to develop as individuals within a caring, supportive and stimulating learning environment, based on Christian principles and values. The school is welcoming, and valuable contributions are made by all members of the school community.

Established strengths

- The clear vision and strong commitment of the head teacher, governors and staff to the continued development of the Christian ethos of the school
- The caring relationships within school and the support which all members of the school community provide for each other, reflecting the Christian values which permeate all areas of school life
- Children's broad learning experiences which contribute very effectively to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- The very strong links with St Laurence's Church and the local community
- The quality of school self-evaluation involving the school community

Focus for development

- Ensure the areas for improvement identified through the school's self-evaluation process and in its school improvement plan are fully addressed.

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

The strong Christian ethos of the school supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all the children very well. The school demonstrates that being a church school is very important and there are numerous examples of how this 'influences the way in which we care for everyone in our school family.' (Prospectus) There is a strong focus on the Christian values of Acceptance, Love and Forgiveness, with the school teddy bear - ALF,

who sits on the worship focal point, providing a visual and effective reminder for the children. A group of children spoke positively about their school which, they agreed wholeheartedly, was a safe and happy place to be. Relationships throughout the school are exceptional, with polite and well behaved children, who have positive attitudes to learning. Parents agreed that the headteacher and teachers were very approachable and that any issues were dealt with swiftly and effectively. Parents with faith and none said they value the contribution the Christian character of the school has on their children's development. They appreciate that their children are encouraged to make important life choices without undue pressure. Of particular note is the six week course in basic Christianity for children in Year 4. Children make their own choice as to whether they wish to be admitted to communion. There is a growing uptake for this commitment, which includes attending a twenty-four hour retreat in Noddfa (a Catholic Christian community). Members of the school and church community spoke of the 'great and lasting impact' this experience had on the children. Parents were enthusiastic about the close links with the church and the relationship with the vicar who, they agreed, was 'wonderful'. Staff are good role models for children, as are older children for younger ones. The buddy system, where a year 6 child takes care of a reception child, is particularly successful and often leads to a lasting relationship. Prayer is an important aspect of school life and they are said not only in collective worship, but in class at various times during the school day. Teachers gave examples of how children had responded to spontaneous opportunities to write and say their own prayers. Children are encouraged to show care and respect for others through regular charity fundraising which prepares them to become responsible citizens. The strong link with the local parish church is effective in nourishing and challenging children's knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. Through visits to local places of worship the children gain an awareness and understanding of other Christian traditions. The school recognises that they do not represent a full range of cultural groups but through their religious education, together with their international and multi cultural education, there is provision of a range of experiences and opportunities which ensure that children develop an awareness, understanding and appreciation of the diverse and rich heritage in the wider world. One recent example was the school's Inter-faith week, run by 'Harmony', a group of people who represent different faiths. Children thoroughly enjoyed the different activities and were congratulated on their ability to ask 'deep and thoughtful questions.' Addressing the focus for development raised at the previous inspection the school shares its outstanding features with other schools.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is an important feature of school life that is valued and enjoyed by all members of the school community. The headteacher and the vicar lead whole school worship and teachers lead worship in each other's classes. Christian themes are well planned, developed and applied in all areas of school life. The school places great emphasis on ensuring that collective worship is inclusive to all. The worship I observed was a joyous occasion. The whole school celebrated together as children were given the Headteacher's award for achievement, behaviour or for positive attitudes. To ensure that the whole school community is involved in this weekly celebration, a photograph of the children is displayed in a special book and their names published in the school's newsletter. The singing of a favourite Christian song, led by the gifted worship leader, was excellent, with signing used as a means of emphasising the meaning of the words. There is a variety of collective worship. These include a regular Eucharist service led by the vicar, and on one notable occasion by the Bishop of Calcutta, and an Advent service, where different representatives of the school community place a Christingle candle on a spiral to represent God's love being eternal. There are services during Lent which are led each week by a Key Stage 2 class who decide on their own theme. Parents, grandparents and members of the church congregation enjoy being part of these services. Children are encouraged to give their views on collective worship in annual questionnaires and these have informed development planning.

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

The headteacher is well supported by the staff team and governors in establishing a Christian model of leadership. A recent review of the school's distinctive Christian aims has involved the whole school community. The governors demonstrate high levels of commitment to the

school and much valued challenging support. They access appropriate training from the diocese and involve themselves in the life of the school. School development planning always includes action on the development of the school as a church school. Religious education (RE) has a high profile in the curriculum and fully supports the Christian ethos of the school. The coordinator provides outstanding leadership, demonstrating clear purpose and sense of direction in driving through initiatives to raise standards of attainment. This has included listening to the views of children and, together with the teachers, making appropriate and effective changes in the RE curriculum. Parents are encouraged to express their views and concerns in an annual questionnaire. These are discussed by the leadership team, including governors, who make an appropriate response in consultation with parents during the termly informal 'coffee and chat' sessions. The proactive PTA group work hard to provide additional funds for school equipment and resources. Children enjoy the responsibilities they are given and are particularly enthusiastic about their role in decision making through the school council. They feel comfortable in expressing their views and are confident that their suggestions are valued and taken seriously. They spoke with pride about their involvement in the interview procedure for appointing a new headteacher. Relationships between members of staff are excellent, with everyone's contribution valued and appreciated. The headteacher explained, 'There is an open communication with the staff – there is an understanding that, together we can work things out.' A teaching assistant runs the eco group which includes the successful 'Garden Gang' which benefits from enthusiastic help given by members of the church and community. The school is committed to the professional development of teachers to prepare them for future leadership of church schools. Governors say that the link between the school and church is 'seamless'. The contribution of the vicar to school life is highly valued by members of the school community. Apart from regularly leading worship he is involved in teaching RE, directing school plays, pastoral care, running a 'Shake, Rattle and Pray' group for toddlers, a club for Year 6 and older children, as well as his role as chair of governors. He is described as a 'much loved friend of the school' and he feels 'blessed to be part of God's family.' The school sees itself as at the 'centre of the community' and enjoys the involvement of a large number of regular helpers from church and community. Frodsham School has a clear sense of direction for further improvement and is right to be proud of its outstanding achievements.

SIAS report November 2012 Frodsham C of E Primary School, WA6 6AF