

**Little Waltham Voluntary Aided Primary School**

The Street  
Little Waltham  
Chelmsford  
CM3 3 NY

**Diocese:**

Local authority: Essex  
Date of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> July 2010  
Date of last inspection: 28<sup>th</sup> March 2007  
School's unique reference number: 8813502  
Headteacher: Mrs Elizabeth Maycock  
Inspector's name and number: Mrs Rosemary Privett 321

**School context**

This is a smaller than average school serving a small village and the surrounding area. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and /or disabilities is below average. The pupils are taught in five mixed age classes. There has been a change in senior leadership since the last inspection, with the current headteacher taking up post in September 2008.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Little Waltham Primary school as a Church of England school are good**

The school promotes a positive and distinctly Christian ethos through the opportunities it offers to all its pupils, and through the caring relationships between all members of the whole school community. The strong links with the parish and the local community contribute significantly to pupils' spiritual, moral, and social development.

**Established strengths**

- Implicit Christian values which underpin all aspects of school life, particularly the relationships between all members of the school community.
- The links between the school, church and the wider community
- The place of collective worship in the life of the school
- The responsibilities given to children which help them to grow into responsible citizens.

**Focus for development**

- To ensure there are robust systems in place to involve all stakeholders in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school as a church school.
- To consider ways of communicating next steps for learning in religious education (RE) to all pupils.

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

Little Waltham is a caring and inclusive community where implicit Christian values have an impact on all aspects of school life. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are eager to talk about their work. Their personal development is outstanding and this is evident in their good behaviour and the very positive relationships they have with one another and with staff. They say that they know they can talk to staff about any problems. Pupils are able to articulate how the implicit Christian values affect the day to day life of the school. One pupil said, 'It's all about relationships really. Relationships between us, the school and God.' There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and flourish as individuals, such as being school councillors. The current school council is led by confident Year 6 pupils who facilitate mature and thoughtful discussions. Others help as eco monitors, lunchtime buddies and playground friends. The school has an established system of rewards. Pupils really appreciate the weekly achievement assembly which celebrates the achievements of all and enables pupils to feel

valued and special. Bright displays and features such as the interactive worship displays in the hall, make a positive contribution to the spiritual development of pupils. The pupil's understanding and appreciation of the wider world is developed well through charity fund raising initiatives, many of which are initiated by the pupils themselves.

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

This is because the daily act of worship is central to the life of the school. It is educational in purpose and has a strong Christian focus which nurtures the pupil's spiritual and moral development. The pupil's attitudes to worship are very good. They listen well, sing enthusiastically and respond appropriately to times of reflection. Pupils say that they enjoy opportunities to participate by leading prayers and acting out bible stories. The rolling programme of themes allows for a variety of approaches. This helps develop pupil's understanding of the Bible, the life of Jesus and Christian festivals, as well as a variety of social and moral issues. Under the strong leadership of the co ordinator, the school is currently undertaking a review of collective worship, ably supported by a lay reader in training from the parish. This review is having an impact on the whole school because the school council is central to the review process, enabling the views of all to be heard. They are approaching the task with considerable enthusiasm and maturity, working with the co ordinator to decide on areas for development. Parish clergy and clergy from other denominations lead worship regularly .The local church is used regularly for services to mark festivals and important times in the life of the school. These services enable the pupils to develop an understanding of aspects of the Anglican tradition. A recently established monthly family service is appreciated by staff, pupils and parents.

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### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

RE is valued highly as a subject. This is evidenced by the very strong leadership of the co ordinator, the carefully planned rolling programme and the commitment of the teaching staff. Lessons are always well planned and include a wide variety of interactive approaches. Pupils say that they enjoy RE lessons. They especially enjoy the opportunities to make things, do drama and role play, which they say helps them to ' *understand more.*' Pupils also say that the teachers give them lots of opportunities to think about what they have learned and relate it to their everyday life. This is evident in the mature and heart felt written and oral responses from pupils to a lesson on the work of the holy spirit in the world. This makes a valuable contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. Monitoring and evaluation in RE is very good. This is because the co ordinator observes lessons regularly and gives staff appropriate development feedback. There are some assessment systems in place, which was in fact an issue in the last inspection. These records show that in RE, most pupils are working at the expected levels for their age. When pupil's are asked to make written responses to what they have learned, marking is not always developmental, so pupils are not always clear about what their next steps for learning are.

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

The headteacher has a strong personal vision for the school which is shared and articulated by staff and governors and appropriately reflects its Christian foundation. She has led and successfully implemented many positive changes over the past 18 months. Because of this, the school's capacity for sustained improvement as a Church school is very good. Teamwork is strong, effective and cohesive and enables all members to feel valued and supported. Relationships are based on mutual trust and respect. A parent said, ' *The school has got the balance as a Church school, just right.*' The school has developed effective links with the local churches and the village community. The vicar visits the school regularly. His pastoral support is valued by the headteacher and staff. The termly family service is an opportunity for the school's Christian character to be shared with the wider community. A very tangible expression of this is when prayers from the schools prayer tree are shared and placed on the altar during the service. The headteacher has ensured that new governors have undertaken training so that they are clear about their roles and responsibilities. This has resulted in a strong shared vision for the future of the school as a Church school. Some effective monitoring and evaluation systems are in place to assess the overall effectiveness of the school. These are particularly strong in the areas of RE and collective worship due to the

skilled leadership of the co ordinator. This is in fact an outstanding feature of the school. The school is aware however, that these systems need to include all stakeholders, and include the evaluation of all aspects of the school as a Church school, in order to gain a bigger picture and enable the school to move forward. **2**

SIAS report July 2010, Little Waltham Primary School, Little Waltham, Chelmsford, Essex  
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