

**Upton Snodsbury Church of England Voluntary Controlled VC First School**

School Lane,  
Upton Snodsbury,  
Worcester  
WR7 4NH

**Diocese: Worcester**

Local authority: Worcestershire  
Dates of inspection: 25<sup>th</sup> May 2011  
Date of last inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> April 2008  
School's unique reference number: 116854  
Headteacher: Lorraine Barber  
Inspector's name and number: Stephanie Boulter

**School context**

Upton Snodsbury Church of England First School is smaller than average with 51 children on roll. The number of learners with special educational needs is lower than average. Following the retirement of the previous Headteacher, a new Headteacher was appointed in September 2010. The school is situated in a small village on a pleasant site, which provides a valuable learning resource and play facility.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Upton Snodsbury as a Church of England school are good**

Upton Snodsbury is a good church school where there is a culture of praise and reward. The Christian character is well defined and influences pupil's personal development effectively. Christian values are enshrined in the life and work of the school. The recently appointed Headteacher has contributed significantly to the success of this school, because of her distinctive vision and decisive action to bring about change. Children benefit from the exceptional care offered which enables them to give of their best and make good progress.

**Established strengths**

- Outstanding quality of care and relationships which foster effective personal, spiritual and academic learning for the pupils.
- The clear vision and drive of the Headteacher and the support of Governors to enhance the distinctiveness of this Church school.
- The excellent teaching of Religious Education which makes a significant contribution to each pupil's spiritual development.

**Focus for development**

- Creatively develop global links so that all children experience the wider aspects of the global Anglican Church.
- Establish a rigorous method of evaluating the impact of collective worship on the school community.
- Improve the evaluation of the impact of initiatives on the pupils and the school.

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

This family school community excels in living out Christian values such as love, care and forgiveness, respect and the uniqueness of every individual as being created in the image of God. The Governors provide good support at every level, checking and evaluating the school's progress as a church school, and acting as a critical friend to the Headteacher. The development of the children's understanding of their role in local, national and global communities has been strengthened by visitors from Zambia. Pupils are given every opportunity to take responsibility for themselves, their behaviour, and their attitudes to one another and to learning. Issues are

resolved quickly and in a consistent, sensitive way. One parent talked about how the school gave her child a 'good moral compass'. Religious Education is valued greatly, and the excellent work produced by the pupils fosters enquiring and reflective responses from them. In an RE lesson, pupils were excited and totally engaged as they learned about a Sikh marriage ceremony. They were confidently comparing the similarities and differences between the Christian and Sikh rites of passage. The art work around the school positively contributes to the sense of pride and joy that all pupils articulated about their school. Other curriculum areas significantly encourage, nourish and challenge the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of most children. In a numeracy lesson, pupils worked in harmony together, demonstrating great care for the needs of others. Teaching assistants interact well with pupils, and encourage them to be open and enthusiastic in their learning. In all lessons observed, pupils shared and presented ideas exceptionally well. The concept of forgiveness and reconciliation is central to behaviour management which focuses on developing rather than punishing the child. One pupil said, *'It is important to forgive, and mean it'*. The school grounds are well used to help the pupils reflect and have quiet time. The 'Forest School' initiative has increased opportunities for the pupils to effectively learn about different habitats and take responsibility for their continued health and growth.

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

Worship forms an essential element in the life of the school. During the inspection the children participated in and enjoyed immensely the 'Open the Book' story about the anointing of David led by members of the Parish Church. Through this drama, the children clearly understood that God looks inside a person's heart, and not at outward appearances. As one pupil said, *'Inside you is more important than outside you'*. The pupils' joy of singing creates a worshipful atmosphere as well as a tangible sense of inclusion and belonging. Worship includes elements of Anglican practice including candles, liturgy and the celebration of festivals such as Harvest, Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter. Pupils contribute to worship by leading prayers, playing musical instruments and producing dramatized stories. In the act of collective worship there was a distinct sense of God's presence in the classroom. The use of prayer boxes in the reception area greatly enriches the prayer life of individuals and the school community. Reflection is used in all curriculum areas as a follow up to collective worship, and the themes of worship are discussed by everyone in the school community. Worship routinely takes place at the local church. Coordination and planning of worship has improved, with plans to extend the themes of worship over several weeks, so that the message can be more firmly embedded with the children. There is a formal system of evaluation which is used well for future planning. There are plans to increase the participation of the children in local church services so that they can experience the wider aspects of Anglican worship within their own community. To ensure the impact of worship is further strengthened, the school does need to evaluate and record the views of all stakeholders. There are close links with the Cathedral and the Archdeacon visits the school termly.

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

The new Headteacher has a vision which encapsulates the Christian ethos of the school. Her vision for the school is clearly articulated and is based on Christian values. Pupils and parents endorse strongly the impact of the school's Christian foundation on their children's moral and social development. Good relationships are widely observed and mutual consideration is very evident. Children are cared for and nurtured and are extremely happy in school. One of the boys in Year 4 commented *'I love everything about my school; we learn lots of stories from the Bible'*. All adults in the school model such a high quality of care and commitment that it is affirmed strongly and appreciated by both pupils and parents. RE is well planned and taught extremely effectively and contributes significantly to the school's Christian character and to the spiritual awareness of learners. The Foundation Governor said, *'Children come first in this school and there is a sense of inclusiveness and a love of learning and a sense of Christian love'*. Diocesan training has been accessed to ensure self evaluation is accurate. All adults contribute to the evaluation process, with Governors attached to particular curriculum areas. This allows them to be actively involved in the life of the school. The school is considering positive ways to initiate wider links with Tanzania as this will greatly benefit pupils' understanding of cultural diversity. Parents affirm that the school engages effectively with their opinions and that communication is excellent. Issues raised in the previous SIAS Report in April 2008 have been successfully achieved.