

Woodchester Endowed Church of England (VA) Primary School

Our church school community seeks to inspire children and adults to love, learn and flourish together so we may become everything God has created us to be.

(Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many' (1 Corinthians 12;14-16)

Governor visits to RE and Worship

Questions for observers to bear in mind when attending worship

Are children and adults given the chance to grow spiritually through prayer, stillness, worship, reflection?

Are they helped to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways?

Are they helped to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world, to encounter the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and Christians' belief in the Trinity?

Are pupils and adults involved in planning, leading, evaluating in ways which lead to improvements?

Are local church community partnerships encouraged to support the school in developing collective worship?

Do the vision and values of the school shape the conduct and content of the worship?

What do the children say?

Thinking about one or more worships, do/can children:

- Talk about worship with enthusiasm
- Explain how it influences their lives in and out of school
- Comment on or evaluate the value and use of prayer and/or reflection in their own lives and those of others
- Take a significant lead in developing worship with their teachers, ministers, visitors
- Show understanding of the importance of the Eucharist in Christian worship
- Demonstrate understanding of the meaning of Christian festivals and of the ways in which they are celebrated.

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VISIT RECORD

Fill in the boxes which are relevant to your visit. Brief notes are ample.

Name and role: Helen Evans Foundation Governor

Date of visit 14th December 2020

Our six core Christian values

Trust Truthfulness Respect Responsibility Friendship Forgiveness

Purpose and focus of visit (agreed in advance with HT, teacher, subject lead and linked to SIAMS action plan and/or SDP) Impact of Covid restrictions on Christmas and advent celebrations in school.

A brief summary of the activities you saw and the resources used by the worship leader, teacher and pupils

Mrs Pennington led the whole school in collective worship via Microsoft Teams.
The assembly started with a Monday Bubble wave - this was a lovely way to create a feeling of togetherness during a time that the children and staff aren't able to mix.

The activities were as follows;

- Lighting of the advent candle with pupil Q&A.
- Bible verse Luke 1:48.
- The Annunciation Artwork - Peer Talk / discussion focusing on Mary and the situation she found herself in.
- Morning prayer of St Patrick.
- Scan images of babies growing in the womb - discussion of how the baby grows, referring the size of the babies at particular gestations, put into real life contexts such as at 1 month the baby is the size of an apple seed.
- Bible reading - Luke 1 39-45 read by a pupil from Willow (YR6).
- Reading of a modern version of the Biblical stories contained within Luke 1.
- A prayer of thankfulness - read by a pupil from Hawthorn (YR3/4 class).
- The Lord's Prayer read as whole school.
- Reflection and discussion on thankfulness.
- School blessing.

Details of pupils' involvement - including planning, leading worship, questioning or answering, drama, reflection.

Pupil Q&A

When Mrs Pennington lit the advent candle she asked the children what was different about this candle compared with the usual candle. Lots of children raised their hands to share their ideas and one child said that the candle colour was different; it was pink rather than white. Mrs Pennington said that was right and asked the children why they thought she had lit a candle that was a different colour and what they thought the candle represented. Again many children were keen to share their ideas and one child suggested it represented Mary. Mrs Pennington explained this was correct and that today we would be learning about two women called Mary and Elizabeth.

The Annunciation Artwork - Peer Talk

Mrs Pennington showed the pupils three different images of The Annunciation and she explained to the children that until 100 years ago most people couldn't read and write and that the way they learnt about Bible studies was by looking at works of art, and that the paintings contained symbols which conveyed a meaning.

Mrs Pennington asked the children to 'peer talk' with the person next to them to discuss what the artists wanted people to know about the story and what clues can you see in each of the pictures. One of the YR1 children in Beech class noticed that all of the pictures were of an angel visiting Mary. Some of the older children in Willow identified that the pictures contained image of white flowers,

possibly lilies or snowdrops and all of the pictures contained a dove (which was abstract in one picture). Mrs Pennington explained that these represented Mary's purity and peace (respectively).

Pupil readings
The pupils read the Bible reading / prayer very well. The readings were clear and read beautifully with expression.

Collective prayer and Blessing
Although I couldn't hear the children in the individual bubbles joining in with the prayer and blessing as the individual classes were muted, I could see that they were happily participating.

Pupil Behaviour
Throughout the assembly the children were respectful in listening to each other and the staff. Those who volunteered to share their ideas waited patiently for their turn to speak. It was very clear that the children and staff have adapted wonderfully to participating in online collective worship and that the impact of the messages and feeling of celebration isn't lost in the online delivery.

The impact on the children
(Evidence to come from what the children do, say, write, how they behave before, during or after a worship, activity or celebration)

The children were engaged and listening thoughout the assembly.

When asked to provide their ideas I was able to see that many children across all of the classes put their hands up and those who were able to share their ideas did so with confidence and demonstrated understanding.

I was unable to hear the discussions which took place during the peer talk but I could see expressions of concentration and interest on the children's faces when they were carefully studying the pictures on the screen and discussing their ideas. Afterwards many children volunteered to feedback their ideas and the quality of the responses further demonstrated that they had listened and actively participated in the activity.

Community links - of any kind

Links made throughout the assembly across the school community, the people in our families and wider school community, the local community and those less fortunate in other parts of the world. Focusing on what we could be thankful for and how our actions could be cause for others to be thankful.

Mrs Pennington highlighted the unusual circumstances that both Mary and Elizabeth faced with their pregnancies and made the point that every mother and baby have a unique and special story.

Historical links made between the present and past, in particular how Bible stores were shared in times when not everyone was taught to read and write.

Our Christian vision in action – any observations linked to the activity visited or classroom, hall displays, reflection areas, Forest Schools, wall displays.

Mrs Pennington made the link between advent and being thankful which is the core Christian value for this term.

Mrs Pennington shared a photograph of the reflection area from Willow class. On the wall there are two questions;

1) What are we thankful for?
2) What could we be more thankful for?

Mrs Pennington pointed out that the second question is where the real learning comes in and where we can see a real change in ourselves / our lives.

Under each question there were speech bubbles containing the children's responses. Mrs Pennington read out a few of the children's responses and drew attention to how the children had provided explanations of things they were thankful for from within their own lives, and showing their awareness of the wider world, in particular those who are less fortunate than they are.

Mrs Pennington then shared some of the children's reflections on what they could be more thankful for. The children had thought about their interactions with other people, their local area/ community, and the wider world. The children had also thought about some of the things we take for granted such as being able to wash our hands with clean water. Mrs Pennington encouraged the children to think about, and be thankful for, all of the things which happened as part of our everyday lives that we might take for granted and the processes which enable these things to happen. For example all of the processes that occur to ensure we have cleaning water in our taps.

The children were then asked think about how Mary and Elizabeth were still able to be thankful for the opportunities they were being given despite the turmoil they were going through.

Then the children were asked to take a moment during the day to think about the following:

1. What could you do today that others would be thankful for?
2. What difference will that make to you, to everyone around us, and to our school community?

They were asked to then record their thoughts and put it in the thankfulness boxes on their class worship tables for Mrs Pennington to read.

Any points to be raised with the Ethos committee?

I was genuinely impressed with the quality of this online worship. In a time where the children and staff are separated into individual class bubbles, and a time when the more traditional activities we might associate with worship (such as drama and singing) aren't possible, it was fantastic to see the sense of togetherness and celebration has not been lost.

It is very clear that children and staff have worked hard to adapt to and overcome the challenges of the covid restriction in order to participate in meaningful online collective worship.

Signature of visitor H Evans Date 15th December 2020

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