

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Baxenden Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Church Avenue,
Baxenden,
Accrington,
Lancashire,
BB5 2RQ

Diocese: Blackburn

LA: Lancashire

Dates of inspection: 30/6/06

Date of last inspection: 28/2/2000

School's Unique reference number: 119440

Headteacher: Mrs K M Adnitt

Inspector's name and number: Mr G Yates

School context

The school is an average size primary school with pupils aged from 4 to 11 years. Most children come from the immediate area which is just outside the centre of the semi rural area of Baxenden. The parish church is 'just across the way' from the school. Some good adaptations have been made to the school building but more still needs to be done.

Summary Judgement

St John's is a good Church of England Primary School that has a clear sense of Christian identity. Collective worship is an outstanding feature.

Established strengths

The Christian collective worship is of outstanding quality.

- There are very strong links with the local church.
- Children mostly behave well and demonstrate a high level of care for each other.
- The headteacher provides good Christian leadership.

Focus for development

- Ensure that the religious education curriculum with regard to the teaching of world faiths other than Christianity is more clearly aligned with the Diocesan syllabus.
- Establish a whole school approach to the assessment and evaluation of religious education.

How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?

The way in which the school meets the needs of all learners is good. The school has a clear sense of Christian identity that impacts well on the children. Children who need help receive it and as a result make good progress. There is a distinct Christian ethos that is evident in the way everyone is treated with rules understood by all. Children look forward to seeing who will win the Kindness Cups that are awarded weekly. The headteacher leads by Christian example. Children are valued as individuals and as a result, they respond well to everything the school has to offer. For example, the school's own World Cup tournament involved all the junior children and was enjoyed by everyone. One child when asked what he liked about the school replied, 'We are a church school and pray to God.' Children mostly behave well and relationships are of a good quality. Children go out of school on visits including one to a school where children have pen pals in Blackpool. The School Council is fairly new but children are proud to be on it and feel it gives them a say in what goes on. The school regularly takes part in charity fund raising. The environment for learning inside school has been improved but some parts of the school have yet to be refurbished. The setting for worship has a Christian focus with the stained glass windows, with their Christian symbols, being very good features. The links with the local church include opportunities throughout the year for children to take part in worship. Parents and the church community value the school highly. Throughout the school are many good examples demonstrating that 'Every Child Matters' is high on the school agenda. For example, the School Council has discussed how to make the tuck shop healthier and the school has received a certificate acknowledging the school's contribution to recycling materials.

What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?

Collective worship is outstanding and occupies a central part in the life of the school. The acts of worship contribute well to the spiritual development of the children through their content, atmosphere and interaction. During the inspection children behaved very well during the celebration assembly and their choral version of the Lord's Prayer made an outstanding contribution to the quality of Christian worship. Children say they look forward to the acts of worship taken by the vicar or the curate. Full advantage is taken of the church being close to the school with the school joining in acts of worship on several occasions as well as taking part in the annual 'Walking Day'. Opportunities are provided to learn about Anglican traditions in the regular contributions made to leading worship by clergy from St John's church. Worship is well planned but there is no formal evaluation. It is presented in a number of ways involving all teaching staff and local clergy. Acts of worship have a clear Christian focus and children say they would like to play a more active part in leading worship. The setting for worship is planned well but it is somewhat difficult to read the words on the screen.

How effective is the religious education?

The effectiveness of religious education is satisfactory. However, the school decided not to follow diocesan guidelines with regard to the number of world religions it should study. As a result, while children have a good knowledge overall of Christianity their knowledge of other world religions is superficial. Children do have a respect for other religions and willingly talk about their Christian beliefs. Evidence from talking to children, looking at their books, looking at teachers' planning and observing a lesson shows that children make satisfactory progress and achieve the expected standards overall. In one lesson Reception aged children responded well to questions about the biblical story of Samuel and enjoyed dressing up and taking part in role play. Children were keen to offer their comments. One child, made the comment, 'To learn about Jesus follow your heart'. There are very few displays of religious education work in the school and some of the written work children are asked to do does not reflect what they are capable of. The school recognises that assessment procedures are not in place.

How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?

Leadership and management shown by the headteacher are both of a good quality and strongly promote the school's Christian foundation. Both parents and children think highly of the school. The headteacher leads by Christian example and receives good support from the clergy and the governing body. She has ensured that the school's Christian purpose is made more explicit. For example, by successfully encouraging staff to take a greater part in school worship so that children see that at St John's worship involves all the community. The weekly invitation to staff to have lunch in 'The Vine' [café in the church] with members of the church community is a very good initiative which brings church and school closer together. Governors are supportive of the school and the vicar and curate play a significant part in ensuring the school's success in promoting the school's Christian foundation. The coordination of religious education is at a very early stage because the coordinator has been unavoidably absent from work. As such, it is understandable that very little evaluation has taken place.

SIAS report June 2006 BAXENDEN ST JOHN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL Church Avenue, Baxenden, Accrington, Lancashire, BB5 2RQ