

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Calder Vale St John's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Calder Vale  
Garstang  
Preston  
PR3 1SR

#### **Diocese of Blackburn**

Lancashire LEA

SIAS inspection: 12 December 2005

Previous S23 inspection: 18 September 2000

URN: 119518

Headteacher: Mrs. E. Heritage

SIAS Inspector NS # : Mr. G. Yates

### **Context**

St John's CE school currently caters for the needs of 25 children aged 4 to 11 years. It is situated next to the parish church in a beautiful rural area about a fifteen-minute walk from the village of Calder Vale. The school building has been much improved over the years and plans are in place to improve further the playground provision. Most children come from the village of Calder Vale and none speak English as an additional language. Children start school with broadly average skills. On the day of the inspection all children were involved in end of term Christmas productions. The involvement of all children in these productions epitomises the outstanding level of inclusiveness that this school believes in and carries out in everything it tries to do.

### **Summary Judgement**

Calder Vale St. John's [Aided] Church of England Primary School is a good school with many outstanding features. It successfully meets the needs of all its children within a distinctly Christian environment. Parents are very happy with the provision with one parent commenting, 'I am delighted with the way my children are educated and cared for by the school.'

### **Established strengths**

- The outstanding quality of Christian worship
- The staff know their pupils very well and links with parents are of a high calibre
- Children are very well behaved, friendly and get on well with each other
- The headteacher leads the school very well and ensures that its Anglican foundation underpins all aspects of school life
- Children have a good knowledge of the Christian faith

### **Focus for development**

- Develop further the children's understanding of other faiths within the context of the diocesan syllabus
- Ensure that when older children use their writing skills in religious education lessons that the work they produce reflects the good writing standards seen in other subjects.

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

The school makes good provision to meet the needs of all its learners. The headteacher and her staff lead by Christian example. Children behave very well. A key factor in the school's success is the very good relations that exist. Children are valued as individuals and as a result, they respond well to everything the school has to offer. For example, they all had at least on part in the Christmas performance and displayed exceptional speaking skills, making it obvious to all that they took a pride in their performance. Children's spiritual development is fostered very well through acts of worship and the experiences encountered in religious education lessons. There is a distinct Christian ethos very evident in the way everyone is treated. The school takes part, on many occasions, in collecting money for those less fortunate than themselves. The environment for learning inside school has been greatly enhanced over the years and as such really encourages children to do their very best. Displays of work relating to Christian themes are evident throughout the school. The school rightly recognises that the outside hard play area for juniors needs to be improved. Links with the local community are outstanding despite the school's remote situation. One villager commented, 'The school's a grand one and has always been so!'

**What is the impact of Collective Worship on the school community?**

School worship is of an outstanding quality and central to school life. Despite the lack of additional space, great care is taken in ensuring that acts of worship take place in a well-organised peaceful environment. Worship has a very good impact on pupils' spiritual development. The school's planned programme of assemblies demonstrates that there is a clear Christian focus and that major Christian festivals are celebrated both in school and in church. Discussions held with children show that they look forward to the daily acts of worship and enjoy taking part. No children are withdrawn. The careful choice of a lively Christian song [Shine Jesus Shine] and the use of symbolism with the candle of hope lit as the fourth candle of the Advent candles really captured the children's imagination.

**How effective is the Religious Education in the school?**

Religious education is effective, especially with regard to promoting children's understanding of the Christian faith. Children look forward to the religious education lessons. Teachers' planning demonstrates that very good attention is given to ensuring children gain a good understanding of Christianity but more needs to be done to develop children's understanding of other faiths. Evidence from talking to children and from looking at their work demonstrates achievement is good overall. There are some good examples of children's work including work relating to 'Women in the Old Testament'. However, when older children are asked to use their writing skills the quality of their writing does not always reflect the very good quality found in other subjects. Children are actively encouraged to take part in discussions and make good use of their ICT skills.

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

Good quality leadership and management contribute well to the success of the school. The headteacher leads by Christian example, and does so very well. She is very keen to ensure that the children receive the best possible education within a Christian environment. There is a real sense of togetherness in the school and all members of staff support the headteacher well. The governing body provides good support and does everything it can to promote the school's aim to provide 'love of mankind, love of one another, love of life itself and love of God'. The school has put in place, since the previous inspection, a whole school approach to the assessment of what children, know, understand and can do in religious education, to move the subject on even further.