

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### St James Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Devonport Way,  
Chorley,  
PR6 0TE

**Diocese: Blackburn**

Local Authority: Lancashire

Headteacher: Mrs. L. Roberts

Inspection date: 5<sup>th</sup> May 2006

Date of previous inspection 12<sup>th</sup> October 2000

Inspector: Mr. W.J. Holliday

#### School context

St James' is a voluntary aided Church of England Primary school situated in the east of Chorley in Lancashire. The school has 185 pupils on roll including 15 pupils who attend part time in the nursery. The majority of children come from within the parish of St. James.

#### Summary Judgement

St James' school is an outstanding Church of England school with a very strong and distinctive Christian ethos which permeates all aspects of school life. The pupils benefit greatly from the excellent support and encouragement they receive in school, from the strong emphasis placed upon developing relationships based upon Christian values, and from the very high level of care provided by members of staff.

#### Established strengths

- The very effective leadership of the school as a church school by the headteacher and governors supported by the very committed staff team.
- The very caring Christian ethos of the school in which all are valued, are made to feel special and are helped to flourish as individuals.
- The excellent relationships between all members of the school community.
- The very strong and mutually beneficial links between the school and the parish church.

#### Focus for development

- Develop a School portfolio for religious education which includes work matched to the national standards in R.E.
- Extend the planning documentation for Collective Worship so that evaluations are recorded, enabling these to inform future planning and delivery of acts of worship.
- As part of their monitoring role, provide opportunities for governors to observe the teaching of religious education and the full range of acts of worship.

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

The school makes outstanding provision through its distinctive Christian character to meet the needs of all its learners. The Christian ethos is extremely strong and permeates all aspects of school life. It is reflected in displays and murals around the school, in classroom practice, in school documentation and in the excellent relationships within the school. Christian values are given a high priority. All children are made to feel special and valued and are helped to flourish as individuals, whatever their gifts or talents. The staff provide excellent role models, work well as a team and are particularly good at building the confidence and self esteem of the children. Pupils from all cultures feel happy, safe and secure in school and their beliefs are respected and valued. Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is excellent and for cultural development very good. The school is a calm and well ordered learning environment. Pupils' behaviour is very good and the children respond well to the range of incentives and rewards. Older pupils provide good support for younger pupils and the children enjoy times when working together with other age groups. Pupils enjoy taking responsibilities, such as being members of the school council or in being prefects or monitors, and perform these roles well. Links with the parish church are excellent. The church and foundation governors are extremely active and supportive in school, with church staff being regular visitors; supporting the curriculum, organising clubs and providing pastoral care to the school community.

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

Collective worship makes an outstanding impact on the school community. Worship is given a high priority in the school and is a key element in its Christian witness. It is extremely well planned, consistently Christian and honours the Anglican tradition. A very good range of opportunities are

provided for worship; whole school, Key Stage and class worship are held throughout the week. Good opportunities are provided for celebrating the achievements of children within the worship programme and these acts of worship are well attended by parents. The school makes good use of the church for worship at the beginning and end of term and joins together with the parish church for major Christian festivals. These joint celebrations have been greatly appreciated by both the school and church community. Good use is made of a range of approaches to worship, including use of drama. A variety of opportunities are provided for listening to bible stories, for prayer, for thinking and reflecting, and for singing and performing action songs. The pupils enjoy collective worship and take part very enthusiastically, eagerly contributing ideas and answering questions. Worship is used extremely well to reinforce Christian values and makes an excellent contribution to spiritual and moral development.

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

Religious education is outstanding. Religious education is recognised by governors, senior management and staff as being of particular importance in the school and is given a high priority. The school makes very good use of the Diocesan Syllabus including assessment activities. Units of work are extremely well evaluated by the staff and the R.E. coordinator. Assessment is developing extremely well and the Coordinator has put in place a very good system for collecting evaluations of the units covered and work samples which reflect pupil's achievements. This now needs to be further developed so that there is a school portfolio with collections of work matched to the national standards in R.E. The quality of teaching in R.E. is extremely good and some outstanding teaching was observed during the inspection. Good use is made of the children's knowledge and experience of their own faith as was seen in a lesson on the 'Hajj' as part of a unit on Islam. Good use is made of differentiation and a good variety of activities are used within lessons to suit the differing learning styles of the pupils. Very good support is provided for those with special learning needs. The coordinator is extremely effective in her role, which includes observation of teaching and regular scrutiny of work. The clergy contribute well to the R.E. curriculum in helping with units such as 'places of worship' or 'baptism'.

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

The leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding. The headteacher and governors provide extremely effective leadership of the school as a church school. They work in close partnership together and have developed a clear Christian vision for the school. This is clearly communicated to the whole school community and very well supported by all members of staff. The governors are extremely supportive of the work of the school and act effectively as 'critical friends'. Although some governors have opportunities to observe some acts of collective worship and reports are received from the coordinator for religious education, there is no clear system for formal monitoring through observation. In order to further develop their monitoring role, more opportunities should be made for governors to observe the teaching of religious education and the full range of acts of worship. There are strong and productive links between the governors, the staff team and members of the local church which benefit the pupils and contribute to the continuing development of the school. Pupils and parents are extremely appreciative of the school ethos and its effect upon their children. The school's self evaluation is sound and the school is in a strong position to continue to develop.

SIAS report May 2006 St James Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School Chorley, PR6 0TE