

Eccleston St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

The Green
Eccleston
CHORLEY
PR7 5TE

Diocese of Blackburn

Lancashire LEA

SIAS inspection: 23 November 2005

Previous S23 inspection: October 2000

URN: 119472

Headteacher: Mr W L Mann

SIAS Inspector NS 25 : Mr P B Jump

Context

St Mary's is an average sized voluntary aided Church of England primary school with 193 children on roll. There are small numbers of children of Traveller, British Indian and mixed heritage. Socio-economic circumstances locally are above average. A smaller than average number of children are identified with learning difficulties.

Summary Judgement

Eccleston St Mary's CE Primary School is an outstanding church school. At its heart is its Christian ethos which permeates all aspects of school life.

Established strengths

- A vibrant Christian ethos evident through worship, relationships and Religious Education;
- A clear whole school vision through very effective leadership;
- Very supportive teamwork between staff, pupils, parents and the local community.

Focus for development

- To review the current mission statement; sharing ownership with the present school family.
- To formalise the already established lines of communication with pupils through the setting up of a school council

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

It is through the contribution of the school's distinctive Christian character that excellent provision is made to meet the needs of all its learners. Learners from all groups are able to flourish as individuals due to feeling valued and special. The great majority from all groups do well and fulfil their potential, whatever their gifts or talents might be. Their academic achievement is good or better in relation to their prior attainment and social background. The school's Christian ethos permeates the whole school family ensuring that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all learners is excellent. The relationships within the school community are evidence of a very strong partnership that exists between pupils, parents, staff, the church and the wider community. This is one of the main foundations upon which the school is built and is characterised by the Christian care and concern for others that exists within and between all members of the school family.

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

Worship occupies a place of vital importance in the life of the school and is a key element in its Christian witness. Acts of worship are very well planned through a four year thematic approach. The delivery is by a variety of staff, clergy, visitors and learners and this enables the children to understand the importance of worship to the adults within the school. Some acts of worship are key stage specific and others whole school. There is a weekly 'bears and prayers' worship for the youngest children and achievement assemblies at the end of the week. There are high levels of participation by individuals and groups of learners and they evoke a very positive response from those attending who see them as inspiring and imaginative. Worship is consistently and recognisably Christian and develops the learners' understanding of the Anglican tradition. There are regular Eucharists held in school that are open to parents, and although the church is over one mile away, the school holds services there several times a year. The Rector is a regular visitor to the school and contributor to worship. In addition, several foundation governors are volunteer helpers in school. There are therefore excellent links between the church and the school.

How effective is the Religious Education in the school?

Religious Education is recognised by all the key stakeholders as being of crucial importance in the school and the subject's status in the school reflects this. The subject is integral to the curriculum as a whole with many cross-curricular themes evident. Displays of learners' work are of a very high quality and reflect the cultural diversity found in society. RE is regarded as a core subject by the school and the standards of attainment are at least comparable with the core subjects of maths and English. The quality of both learning and teaching is high and the subject makes a major contribution to spiritual and moral development. Whatever their own faith background learners enjoy the subject and acknowledge its relevance to their own lives. Schemes of work fully comply with the Blackburn Diocesan syllabus and reflect the school's Christian foundation at the same time as giving due weight to other faiths. The assessment procedures in the school are excellent and learners' progress is as carefully tracked in RE as in any other subject.

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

The Head Teacher and governors provide exceptionally effective leadership promoting a distinctive vision for the school. The Rector is the Chair of Governors and oversees RE and Collective Worship. Foundation governors are fully involved in the life of the school as parents and volunteer helpers. The school's Christian purpose is very well thought-out, clearly communicated to parents, supported by all members of the school staff and evident in practice in all aspects of school life. This impacts on all learners by enabling them to develop their full potential. There are well-established and highly effective systems for monitoring, evaluating and developing relevant areas, including collective worship. Learners, through questionnaires, their own reports and circle time, and parents through questionnaires, an open school policy and the approachability of the Head and staff are fully involved with this. Learners and their parents speak appreciatively of the school's Christian ethos, the commitment of the staff to all individuals and the high quality of education provided. The school enjoys a very close and productive relationship with the local Church community.

SIAS NOVEMBER 2005 Ecclestone St Mary's CE VA Primary School, Lancashire, PR7 5TE