

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Great Harwood St John's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

St John's Street
Great Harwood
Blackburn
BB6 7ES

Diocese of Blackburn

Lancashire LEA

SIAS inspection: 22 November 2005

Previous S23 inspection: 19-23 June 2000

URN: 119420

Headteacher: Mrs. Jill Walmsley

SIAS Inspector NS: Mrs. Mary A.R. Binks

Context

The school has 169 pupils on roll but is split onto two sites. There are recognised advantages and disadvantages in this, but much is done to establish a sense of pride in belonging and identity with the whole school. The church and school have a close relationship which is made stronger as the school is used as the principal worship centre for the parish. There is value in the community coming together for social and fund-raising activities.

The school is experiencing a period of distinctive development with the appointment of a new Head Teacher in January this year and currently an acting Deputy Head Teacher. The formation of a clear focus for improvement to the life of the school helps to create positive feelings of optimism and willing participation.

Summary Judgement

Great Harwood St John CE Primary School has a strong Christian foundation upon which there is a determination to build. The warm and welcoming environment provides security and consistency for all learners and all of those concerned with the school.

Established strengths

- . The school has an openly friendly and welcoming policy where all learners feel valued and cared for and which is equally welcoming to all involved in different ways in school life.
- . The strong Christian foundation which is valued within the school, the church and the local community.
- . Open recognition of the need for development and a clear focus to face the challenges in order to achieve progress.

Focus for development

- . The school needs to maintain its focus on the set targets in its Development Plan so that progress is established and maintained.
- . The school, through its active and progressive example, needs to take a lead in encouraging and enabling the continued growth in relations with the parish and local community.

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

The school has a good Christian ethos which has a positive influence upon the children's behaviour and attitudes. This also reflects in the quality of relationships between staff and children and in their commitment to school improvement. The Head Teacher's personal philosophy, commitment and drive make for leadership which is appreciated and valued by all concerned and connected with the school. The school has created a bright and interesting environment which makes it attractive and welcoming to visitors and stimulating for the pupils. There is recognition of the need to build on the relationships with those in the community from minority ethnic and faith backgrounds with the current Bi-lingual Assistant actively working in this area. This will help enhance the experience and knowledge throughout the school of cultural differences and influences as well as faith beliefs and practices.

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

Collective Worship has a satisfactory impact on the school community. It is important in the school's life and is a key element in its Christian witness. The acts of worship are well planned and enable regular contributions from pupils, staff members and the clergy. Children in Year 6 willingly assist in preparing the Hall for worship. Pupils have positive feelings about worship and would welcome more involvement in preparing and presenting acts of worship. There are good links with the church, particularly as the main worship space is shared. These links enable the children to appreciate that they are part of an active Christian community. Parents recognise the importance of worship to the school's life and welcome opportunities to attend. The school is sensitive to the beliefs and traditions of those of other faiths and has included plans to improve relationships and include visitors from other faiths in its Development Plan. This will broaden the children's knowledge and experience of other cultures and faiths.

How effective is the Religious Education in the school?

Religious Education has a satisfactory effect on the school community. The Senior Management and staff recognise the significance of Religious Education and the subject is given appropriate time within the curriculum. The staff appreciate the guidance and support provided by the Coordinator and have gained confidence in using the Diocesan Syllabus and accompanying materials. This has helped in developing more variety in the teaching and improved the range of activities for the pupils. Resources are limited, but opportunities to build these up are included in the plans for development. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and the children showed interest in the subject. The use of assessment is now established throughout the school. This will help to give the staff and pupils a clearer focus for developing RE throughout the school. Judaism and Islam are the other faiths taught and this adds to the cultural knowledge of the pupils.

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

The leadership and management is currently having a satisfactory impact on the school. The school is undergoing a period of development. The Head Teacher has a clear Christian vision for the school which is recognised amongst the staff and governors and also within the community. There is an overall commitment to the care and support of the pupils and to the raising of standards. This will have a positive effect on the children's learning and their attitudes to school. Governors and staff are working together and the mutual respect and understanding are proving beneficial. It is recognised that much is dependent on key individuals and effective partnerships and that relationships are vital to the school's progress.

SIAS NOVEMBER 2005 Great Harwood St John CE VA Primary School, Lancashire BB6 7ES