

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Norley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Hough Lane
Norley
Frodsham
WARRINGTON
WA6 8JZ

Diocese: Chester

LA: Cheshire

Dates of inspection: 5 July 2006

Date of last inspection: 1999

School's Unique reference number: 111249

Headteacher: Mrs Alison Eaton (Acting)

Inspector's name and number: Mr Ian Newton 273

School context

Norley CE Primary School is a small school with 64 pupils, serving a sparsely populated rural community from in and around the village. The school recently campaigned to remain open and is expected to become part of a federated voluntary aided primary school from September 2006. The permanent head teacher resigned his position at Easter 2006 and for this term the deputy head is acting head teacher.

Summary Judgement

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Norley CE Primary School as a Church of England school is good with children's personal development being nurtured in an ethos based on Christian principles. It is a place where they feel valued and listened to. There are high expectations of all who work and learn in the school. The professionalism of and good role models set by the staff is valued by parents.

Established strengths

- Very good relationships at all levels which are exemplified by very good behaviour where everyone is valued and nurtured in an ethos of Christian love.
- Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good.
- The good community support, particularly from parents, and the successful links with the parish and the Methodist church.

Focus for development

- Gather children's views on collective worship more systematically to inform planning.
- As the school moves to voluntary aided status, the incumbent and head teacher should plan collective worship more closely.
- Ensure that Foundation Governors are aware of their responsibilities with the school's change of status.
- Give greater prominence to the distinct Christian foundation of the school.

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

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good at meeting the needs of all learners.

The "friendly, welcoming" ethos of the school was commented on by a number of parents. The acting head teacher through her Christian commitment, which is shared by staff, promotes a good level of care for all pupils. Children enjoy school, achievement is good and standards are above average. Children feel safe, valued and listened to with staff responding to their concerns. For example, the School Council raised issues to do with the provision of sports equipment and bullying which received a positive response. Flexible planning ensures that the needs of all pupils are met. Networking with other local schools and the Local Authority ensures that children have access to enrichment and other activities. Social development is a particular strength. Children are given opportunities to take responsibility for younger ones through a well developed buddy system. Residential and other visits have a positive impact on children's personal development and they are given opportunities to engage in outdoor and adventurous activities. On a visit to the Lake District they were given the chance to appreciate the natural environment through a forest walk

and gain some experience of independent living “not staying with my mum and dad for a while.” An awareness of cultural diversity is achieved through the inclusion of a study of Hinduism in the RE syllabus.

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

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory. There is a satisfactory structure for the planning of collective worship, but children and the church are not sufficiently involved. There is not a clear planning model for the acting head teacher and the incumbent to work to. The acting head teacher has begun to develop an evaluation model with children’s involvement which is good practice. She recognises the need for this to become more formalised and embedded. The incumbent is supportive to the school in raising the profile of some Anglican practices, for example, teaching the children about baptism. Good use is made of the church and the incumbent is effective and supportive in teaching the children about the liturgical year. Children are taken to the parish church for services to celebrate major Christian festivals and significant events in school life such as the “Leavers’ Service.” On occasions children attend services and celebrations at Chester Cathedral. These events and activities contribute to their spiritual awareness and personal development. A number of visitors, including local clergy, lead the collective worship which the children enjoy and appreciate. Several spoke enthusiastically of the involvement in worship that the Methodist youth leader plans into his acts of collective worship. Children enjoyed voting for their favourite hymns. There are few visual signs and symbols around the school that signify its Christian foundation.

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 good. The acting head teacher is to be commended for the way that she has maintained the distinctiveness of the school during a very turbulent period of change. One parent governor commented on the way the staff had not let the issues surrounding the uncertainty of the school’s future affect their work referring to their very professional attitude and remarking that they were “honourable.” Staff at the school are held in high esteem by parents and governors. There is a shared vision of what it means to be a Church school. Governors and the acting head teacher have worked well to prepare the school for its next stage of development by involving the head teacher from Kingsley in some school activities so that she is introduced to the community. The strategic plan does not, however, show any development in terms of further developing RE and collective worship, although from discussion this has clearly been discussed with the head teacher of the proposed federated school. Governors have been proactive in securing the future of the school and are looking to revise the admissions policy to prepare for the next stage of the school’s development. There is a need to ensure that all foundation governors are aware of their responsibilities in respect of the new aided status.

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