

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Pilling St John Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Ladies Hill,
Pilling,
Preston,
Lancashire.
PR3 6HA

Diocese: Blackburn

LA: Lancashire

Dates of inspection: July 6th, 2006

Date of last inspection: 17th January, 2000

School's Unique reference number: 119555

Headteacher: Mrs P.A.Tate

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Georgina Lewis

School context

Pilling St John's Primary school is a small rural school. There are 70 pupils organised in three mixed age classes ranging from Reception to Y6. Pupils come from the local community and neighbouring hamlet of Eagland Hill. The number of pupils moving into the school, especially at the end of Key Stage 2 is sometimes high, which can have a significant effect on year group results.

Summary Judgement

St John's Church of England Primary school is a good church school with some outstanding features. Through its distinctive Christian character the school meets the needs of its pupils very well. The strong commitment to prayer life in the school is seen in the pupils' prayers used in Collective Worship and at other times during the day.

Established strengths

- The impact of Collective Worship on the school community
- The involvement of all staff and governors in school development planning process
- The art work produced by pupils in Religious Education .

Focus for development

- Introduce a system of assessment in Religious Education in order to ensure that the pupils' work is in line with national expectations
- Develop further the role of the RE co-ordinator

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

The way in which the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meets the needs of its pupils is outstanding. There are numerous symbols and inspirational posters around the school demonstrating the commitment to its Christian foundation, giving pupils an environment which encourages the good behaviour and attitudes seen. Each classroom has a 'quiet' space where pupils can pause and pray or just be quiet and reflect. This adds to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which are very good. The close relationship between the parish church and the school adds to its distinctive character. There are reports to the Parochial Church Council by Foundation Governors and the Parish Magazine is available in school. Pupils celebrate all the major festivals of the Church of England in church and are aware of the importance of the relationship with the parish church. Pupils' achievements are celebrated in the many displays of their work. Art work is exceptional from all year groups. The stations of the cross, 'Christ's Journey', is an outstanding example of pupils' art work and their understanding of the Easter message. Pupils take pride in their school. Notes from visitors to the school's Open Day praised pupils for their attitude when showing them around the school. Staff and pupils respect one another. Pupils are polite and courteous. This was especially praised by the various ministers on the Y5 and Y6 church visiting day undertaken as part of their RE work on the day of the inspection. Pupils show care for one another and display confidence in talking about their work and their school.

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

The impact of Collective Worship is outstanding. Acts of worship are very well planned, pupils are actively involved and read their own prayers. In the collective worship which was observed, pupils responded enthusiastically to the head's request for areas in the village for which prayers were needed. Each week prayers are said for specific roads in the village, this co-ordinates with prayers in the parish church. Pupils' singing, which is unaccompanied, is enthusiastic and tuneful. The vicar and other clergy in the village are actively involved in the detailed programme of worship. Resources are provided and training from the Diocese ensures high quality worship led by a variety of people. The pupils have a very active prayer life. There is a school prayer recited by all pupils. Prayers are said at the beginning and end of each day and also at lunch times. There is close liaison with the church to celebrate the major festivals of the Anglican church. Pupils understand the various seasons of the church calendar and know what the colours of the seasons are and what they symbolise.

How effective is the religious education?

Religious Education is satisfactory. A new R.E. co-ordinator was appointed in September 2005 and has begun the process of helping other teachers to develop their RE teaching. Prior to this appointment, all RE was taught by the previous headteacher. The resources, planning and support provided is helping teachers grow in confidence. There is insufficient use made of assessment to inform future learning. Pupils' knowledge and understanding is satisfactory overall. The mixed age classes are given differentiated work when studying topics and this ensures that the needs of all pupils are met. Pupils' attitudes are positive. The school is to be commended that it does not rely on worksheets but actively encourages independent writing. There are good examples of the use of ICT in Key Stage 2 pupils' work. The art work accompanying written work is exceptional. Writing reflects what pupils have learned and understood. Writing across the school has been identified as an area for development. Year 5 and 6 pupils participating in a day's activity involving visits to all the churches in the village were still enthusiastic at the end of a long day. When they reached the parish church, St John the Baptist, near the school, they responded enthusiastically to the vicar's questions about their other visits. They showed how much they had learned about each of the churches and were able to tell the vicar about the 'old' church in the village which had been replaced by his church. The vicar showed pupils the various garments worn by him in services. They showed obvious enjoyment at being asked to model the clothes and were attentive and able, at the end of the session, to recall the names of the garments. They were able to recall, from earlier RE lessons, what each of the colours of the vicar's stoles and the altar frontispiece signified. Although RE is at present satisfactory, the capacity to improve is good given the commitment of the headteacher, co-ordinator, and governors in promoting the subject. RE makes a significant contribution to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. It reinforces messages which are firmly based in the school's Christian foundation, through the topics chosen for study and the way in which links are made with PHSE and collective worship. Pupils' art work for 'Christ's Journey' is outstanding both in its quality and the way in which it demonstrates pupils' understanding. The sculpture of Christ falling whilst carrying His cross and the larger - than - life -size Christ on the Cross are exceptional pieces of work created by a number of pupils working together.

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 are good. The leadership of the headteacher is having a very positive impact on all areas of the school. The headteacher's own Christian commitment is clearly demonstrated in the care and support given to all in the school. Worship is interactive and co-ordinated with PHSE and R.E. Governors are now actively involved in decision making where previously they received conclusive reports. The Foundation Governors and the vicar are now more involved in decision making and were delighted to be given the opportunity to have a greater say in school development planning than previously experienced. The staff and leaders share a common vision for the school and

development of co-ordinators' roles is part of the School Development Plan. The governing body participates in training and appreciates the new role they now have in developing the shared vision. The school's policy documents all clearly state the school's Mission Statement and its aims. The importance of every pupil is seen in the many ways in which pupils' work is displayed. There is real pride in achievement and pupils can be heard valuing the work of others. Two boys were overheard discussing some of the work displayed in the 'Art Gallery' - a whole corridor set aside for display. They were not only complimenting the work but also looking at it 'critically'; a good example of the way in which the school values pupils' work and encourages high standards. There is close liaison with the local village community. The school participates in all major village activities and is highly respected by the community, as can be seen in the notes left on 'Open Day' by various visitors. These expressed their enjoyment at being involved as well as comments about the pupils and their work on display.

SIAS report July 6th, 2006 Pilling St John Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School