

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Chad's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Hove Edge

Brighouse

HD6 2PA

Diocese: Wakefield

LA: Calderdale

Dates of inspection: 6th July 2006

Date of last inspection: 2000

School's Unique reference number: 107549

Headteacher: Peta Cocker

Inspector's name and number: Alan Thornsby NSIN 137

School context

St Chad's is a small school on the outskirts of Brighouse.

Summary Judgement

St Chad's school is a satisfactory church school with the capacity to rapidly improve. The new headteacher and deputy have had a significant impact on its distinctiveness and the attainment of pupils.

Established strengths

- The commitment and vision of the head teacher
- The impact of the Christian ethos and links with the church on the attitude of pupils.
- The use of quality time to explore religious education through RE days.

Focus for development

- To evaluate the impact of being a distinctive church school
- To explore the use of displays and posters to reinforce the values and spiritual dimension 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 satisfactory, with some strong features, in meeting the needs of all learners.

This is because all policies specifically relate to the Christian values and principles that are at the heart of the school. The mission statement 'to prepare each child to meet the challenge of the future in a supportive and stimulating Christian environment' is evident in the welcoming and caring atmosphere of the school. This results in a family like learning situation with respect for others because relationships are good. Pupils enjoy school and speak warmly of the staff that support them. There is peer support for pupils through 'Chad's chums' and a buddy system between Y6 and reception pupils. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are features of cross-curricular learning as well as RE and worship. This is reinforced by the pupils willingness to be involved in charity fundraising. Reflective questioning to promote spiritual development enhances some displays in school but the spiritual dimension to the life of the school is not consistently promoted. Although there is a cross in the hall and in each classroom, there is little physical evidence to reflect the Christian foundation of the school.

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

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.

This is because of the central role it has in the life of the school and the opportunities given to the pupils for reflection. They see this as 'a time to think about things and possibly solve problems'. Their understanding of hymns and awareness of deeper meanings is increased by having time in hymn practices to think about the words. All staff lead worship and most pupils respect the quiet atmosphere, focussing on music as they enter the hall. They refer to the benefits of worship as 'learning to live' and 'to follow the example of Jesus' and this is seen in routines in school. Prayer has an important role in school and is said at lunchtime and at the end of the day. Pupils also can ask to be included in prayers in Friday assembly by using

the prayer board. This gives pupils a real sense of being part of a supportive worshipping community. The vicar is a regular visitor in school. His presence reinforces the values of the school and gives opportunities for pupils, parents and staff to share achievements, worries and doubts. Awareness of the Anglican tradition is developed by the use of St. Chad's church for Festival services and the Leavers' Eucharist that is planned and led by Y6 pupils. It is also used as a teaching resource, for example to teach younger pupils about baptism. Pupils have the opportunity to experience the wider family of the Church by visiting another of the town's churches for Education Sunday, to which pupils from the different church schools contribute.

How effective is the religious education?

Effectiveness of religious education is satisfactory, with some strong features. This is because of the commitment of the co-ordinator to her subject management and the impact of termly Religious Education days on the staff and pupils. There has been a positive refocus on the importance of religious education in the school. The committed coordinator has developed the syllabus. She is aware of the need to develop a system of assessment to give an accurate picture of the quality of teaching and learning. The pupils have a very positive attitude to the subject because of the termly RE days. These give pupils opportunities for extended time to compare Christianity and other faiths. Key stage one pupils clearly enjoyed working as family groups to explore the theme of 'Belonging'. Older pupils displayed a deep awareness of respect for a holy book in the tangible silence as the teacher explained the rituals surrounding the Qur'an. Their knowledge and respect were evident when a member of staff asked to borrow the Qur'an and was asked if she had washed her hands. Planning of lessons is satisfactory, although attainment is sometimes limited by a lack of challenging tasks, especially where pupils are linking key beliefs to everyday life. There are inconsistencies in the quality of marking which does not always focus on the objective for the lesson or explain to pupils what they need to do to improve.

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 satisfactory with some strong features. This is because of the commitment of the headteacher and deputy to develop the whole school community as part of the Christian ethos of the school. The documentation reflects the Christian foundation of the school and this is well communicated to the parents. The vision of the school has been synthesised into a mission statement by the staff and governors in a joint training day. This, with the importance given to RE and collective worship, has provided a greater awareness of the school's distinctiveness as a church school. The school has a supportive and challenging governing body that is aware of its role in raising the standards of the school. There has, as yet, been little formal evaluation by the school to measure the quality of this distinctiveness and so it does not play a part in strategic planning. Parents and pupils value the ethos of the school and describe all staff as being friendly and ready to solve problems. The vicar is a regular visitor in school and also a critical friend. Links with the church are good because of this and the church is used for services and as a teaching resource. The school supports the church in its use of the building for an annual Christmas fete. There are good links with other local church schools for staff and for pupils, especially during transition to the high school, as well as links with the local catholic school. This is a strength that makes an impact on pupils. Parents actively support school and church events.