

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Walsden Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School,

Rochdale Rd,
Walsden,
Todmorden,
OL14 6SW

Diocese: Wakefield

LEA :Calderdale

Dates of inspection: 7th June 2006

Date of last inspection: 12th-16th March 2001

School's Unique reference number: 107539

Name of Headteacher: Mrs Alison Parkinson

Inspector's name with National Society inspector's number: Mr J. Jagger (214)

School context

The school is a three-class infant school of 52 pupils serving the village community of Walsden and with an age range of 4-7 years.

As a result of structural problems to the original school building adjacent to St. Peter's Church, the school was temporarily re-located to occupy part of a neighbouring primary school and then to the current buildings occupying space within the grounds of Walsden Junior School. All parties concerned with that re-location are to be complimented on the quality of the temporary accommodation and of the successful efforts made to ensure a secure and pleasing environment. The school lacks easy access to soft-play facilities and shares hall space for Physical Education with its host school but has adapted well to its new environment.

Summary Judgement

All aspects of the school's work inspected were judged to be of a good standard. The manner in which all those responsible have responded to the recent months of difficulty has been outstanding.

Established strengths

- The school is very successful in encouraging pupils' self-esteem and personal confidence and in giving pupils a real voice in the evaluation of provision;
- Behaviours in school are good with pupils being polite to others and respectful of property whilst being enthusiastic and active and making very good use of the limited outdoor facilities;
- The members of staff work well together as a team, supporting each other and working flexibly within and sometimes beyond their assigned roles;
- The school very successfully combines its role as a village community school with its clear affiliation to the Christian church.

Focus for development

The school successfully operates as a good Church of England controlled school but could further strengthen provision by;

- Reviewing some aspects of its documentation to more clearly recognise its church affiliation and its support for Christian values and traditions;
- Identifying and implementing strategies to better evaluate the impact of the programme of worship on pupils' knowledge and understanding

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

The school strongly reflects Christian values and very successfully meets the requirements, spiritual, academic and social, of its children and provision in this area is judged to be good.

It would have been understandable if the school's ability to maintain its church identity in the face of the difficulties of its relocation had faltered but this has not

happened. Indeed the recognition of the danger of this by staff and governors has actually resulted in the development of a closer and clearer relationship between church and school. Visits to the church are regular and purposeful, clergy and governors have maintained close contact within the new location and members of the church play a very active role in supporting the social dimensions of school life.

The progress of all pupils is carefully tracked and records are well maintained and pupils are well known as individuals. Provision for pupils with special needs identifies required support programmes and these are delivered within school with some support from some local authority resources. Communication with parents is regular and parents seem at ease in school.

Activity is evident within the "Every Child Matters" programme and there is abundant evidence of pupils engaging in physical activity through well developing support programmes at lunchtimes and after school. The school is actively pursuing the Investors in Pupils programme and has Healthy Schools status.

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

Collective worship contributes positively to the Christian experience and is judged to be of a good standard. The current building provides no purpose built location for worship. The school therefore makes imaginative and successful use of the entrance lobby and staircase as a base for most acts of worship. Despite being a little cramped the space provides an intimate location for worship with a clearly defined focal point. Pupils were enthusiastic about their singing and listened carefully to the narrative of the act of worship observed that was led by local clergy. The planning and delivery of worship is guided by a useful policy that identifies a programme of daily worship placing Christianity at the centre of that programme. It also gives due recognition to the celebration of other faiths and to the examination of appropriate behaviours, moral issues and respect for others and their ideas. Within the act observed the opportunity was given for pupils to reflect on the impact of wind and fire on the disciples. Such reflection is an important aspect of worship and its recognition could be strengthened within the policy statement. The school visits the church of St. Peter's regularly and celebrates the key Christian festivals on these visits. The school has shared some of these services with pupils from their previous host school and pupils have visited that school for Eid celebrations. The policy clearly identifies arrangements for parents to exercise their right of withdrawal from worship and one child, supported by a parent, exercises that right. In response to a previous report the school has developed a structured plan for the delivery of worship and this is followed and a record maintained of the worship. Local clergy give strong support to the programme of worship with the Canon of Todmorden and the local curate contributing each week to a varied programme also led by the headteacher and by teaching staff.

The act of worship observed was of a good standard and pupils were later able to recall aspects relating to the theme of the assembly and to others such as the Shrove Tuesday worship led by the curate. The school does acknowledge that there is still scope to further explore the use of interviews to strengthen the evaluation of the impact of worship on the knowledge and understanding of pupils. The need for this is increased as the available space precludes teaching and support staff being present throughout the school based acts of worship. The support provided by policy and planning, the creative use of a challenging environment and the commitment of those leading worship result in an event providing a communal experience appropriate to the age and experience of the pupils.

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

The quality of leadership and management of the school is judged to be good but several aspects of the response to the recent disruption have been outstanding. Leading the school through the challenges of the last few terms has been a challenging task for both senior management and for the governing body. Both have

responded well and the school is now utilising the very good, if limited, facilities of the new building to considerable advantage. The day to day routines of the school are well established, great emphasis is placed on pupil security, particularly relating to road safety, and staff work well together, providing good support for pupils. The school provides a good moral and social education for pupils within a strong and clear Christian environment. It would be useful, however, if during the next review of documentation governors considered strengthening the references to the Christian affiliation of the school within documents such as the Mission Statement, the Policy for Sex Education and the PHSCE Policy. It is strongly emphasised within the school's prospectus.

It is evident that governors have strongly supported the school through the difficulties it has successfully passed through and that they maintain a close understanding of key documents and regularly review and evaluate strategic and financial decisions. The leadership of the headteacher is of a high standard. Communication with parents is strong, as is the working relationship with the local authority. There are strong links with the community and the school is seen as a school for the village community but parents and pupils value the association with the church.

SIAS Report Walsden Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School,
Rochdale Rd, Walsden, Todmorden, OL14 6SW