

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Barton, St. Lawrence Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Jepps Avenue

Barton

Preston

PR3 5AS

Diocese: Blackburn

Local authority: Lancashire

Dates of inspection: 5th July, 2007

Date of last inspection: Nov. 2002

School's unique reference number: 119562

Headteacher: Kathryn Pym

Inspector's name and number: Neville Norcross NS403

School context

Barton St. Lawrence is a smaller than average, rural primary school to the north of the city of Preston. The immediate catchment area is one of high socio-economic status. However, a significant number of children are drawn from a wide geographical area. Many of the children have attended the part-time playgroup which is based on the site. It is a voluntary aided school in which the majority of the governors are appointed by the Church of England.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Barton St. Lawrence, Church of England School are outstanding

Barton St. Lawrence has a very clear Christian vision for the school community. It pursues this vision with rigour, with enthusiasm and with sensitivity. The Christian character of the school has a very positive impact upon the personal development and academic achievement of every child in school.

Established strengths

- The family atmosphere in which all members of the school community are valued as individuals and enabled to reach their full potential
- The quality of the provision for children's spiritual development
- The clear Christian vision of the headteacher and governors, which is pursued with conviction

Focus for development

- Build on the current assessment procedures in religious education so that all staff are aware of the standards which are being achieved.

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

Meeting the needs of every individual child is a cornerstone of the school's mission and this enables all children to be confident and happy learners. The School Council plays an important role in the school's decision making processes but procedures are in place which ensure that all children feel included in the development of their school. Christian values are central to all that the school seeks to achieve and this has a positive impact upon the personal development and academic achievement of all the children. They have high levels of self esteem and are able to work as independent learners. They are very willing to support each other both in the classroom and in the playground. Very good systems are in place which enable older children to care for those who are younger or feeling vulnerable. The school has used the Every Child Matters agenda creatively; adapting it according to the children's needs and ensuring that it is permeated by Christian values. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is outstanding. This is most evident in the challenging activities

in religious education and the prayer life of the school both within and beyond the daily act of collective worship. The quality of the relationships between all members of the school community is outstanding and provides a firm foundation upon which school development can take place. There is a high level of co-operation and an open acknowledgement of the way in which belief has an impact upon personal and professional life. Values such as respect, trust and forgiveness can be seen at the heart of these relationships. The Christian character of the school can be seen very clearly in the displays which are attractive and interactive and give support to the religious education and spiritual development of the children.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The daily act of worship is a central feature of school life. It is where all children and members of staff together celebrate the Christian values which are most important to the school. All members of staff attend. The worship helps to promote spiritual development through the atmosphere which is created and through the use of the senses and times of quiet reflection. Staff, parents and governors articulate positive views of worship and appreciate its impact on their lives. There are many occasions when children can take part and they particularly enjoy those times when they can be involved in the planning of worship. Worship is well planned and takes account of significant events in the life of the church such as festivals and Saints days. The rolling programme of themes is currently being reviewed to ensure that a broad and balanced range of themes is in use. Children's own prayers are often used in both daily worship and in the classrooms. The provision of quiet, reflective areas in each classroom makes a significant impact upon children's spirituality. In one classroom the quiet area is used at the end of each day and at other times when children feel that they need a time apart. This area has an interactive element which invites children to respond. There are very close and successful links between the worship in church and school. There are regular occasions, such as Education Sunday, when worship is held in school and the congregation join staff and children in the school hall. The Eucharist is a prominent feature of school life. A programme of teaching by the curate has helped children to understand the meaning of this service which takes place in church on a monthly basis. Parents and members of the parish are invited to attend the service with the children and staff. Much trouble is taken to make sure that this is a relevant and meaningful experience for every child. Whilst the worship is matched to the children's needs it also takes account of Anglican liturgy in a way which enhances the worship. The Roots Programme, which forms the basis for the school's planning in worship, is based on the cycle of readings to be heard each week in church but is given a creative approach so as to make it relevant to children.

The effectiveness of religious education is good

The standards which are achieved in religious education are good. The quality of teaching is good overall and some aspects are outstanding. The way in which teachers use the techniques of the "Godly Play" method across their teaching in RE is a major contributor to the good standards. Children learn not only "about" religion but also "from" religion thanks to the creative tasks which are set for them. Children have many opportunities to express thoughts feelings and ideas in writing, pictures and drama as well as in the spoken word. The children's attitudes to religious education are very positive and they speak with enthusiasm and knowledge about their work. Some children are able to express profound thoughts on challenging subjects. They know that they can express their beliefs openly and that they will be taken seriously. One pupil was able to compare the lives of the Bishop of New York, who recently visited school, and Martin Luther King by saying that they were both powerful yet peaceful people who spoke from the heart. The children have a good understanding of the Christian faith. They have a good knowledge of the Bible and its significance for Christians. They also demonstrate knowledge of and respect for other faiths such as Islam and Judaism. Links with St. Lawrence's church provide children with good opportunities to explore Anglican faith and practice. Religious education is well resourced. The staff have taken part in a comprehensive programme of in-service training, some of which has been delivered by a school governor with a particular expertise. The strong and effective links with Blackburn Diocese have enabled the school to reflect on and then develop its practice. The planning takes account of the QCA 8 point scale for assessment. The subject leader has begun to collect and assess children's work in a portfolio. This is a very helpful development although it

does not currently provide sufficient evidence to give staff a comprehensive understanding of the children's achievements.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding

The headteacher and governors have a very clear Christian vision for the school which they articulate with enthusiasm and a depth of understanding. The headteacher's personal commitment has been vital in establishing this vision and in ensuring that it is shared by every member of the school community. A recent vision and values day included all staff, teaching and non-teaching and governors and provided an excellent opportunity for every one to focus on the school's priorities as a church school. The school governors have a very good understanding of the impact which the school is having on pupils. They provide an excellent balance of support, encouragement and challenge for the headteacher. The school has good procedures for self-assessment of its Christian character and for ensuring that identified priorities find their way into the School Improvement Plan. The governors are very determined to implement recruitment procedures which support the school's distinctiveness. Parents are very clear that this is a church school and appreciate the positive impact which it has on their children. The headteacher is the subject leader for both religious education and worship. She has a very good understanding of each area. She knows what the school's strengths are and where further developments are needed. The school governors share this understanding and are well placed to ensure that the current excellent provision continues. The underlying strength of the school's success lies in the teamwork between all members of the school community together with a shared understanding of what a vibrant, inclusive Christian community should look like.

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