

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Christ Church Upper Armley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Theaker lane

Leeds

LS12 3NU

Diocese of Ripon and Leeds

Local authority: Leeds

Date of inspection: 9th July 2007

Date of last inspection: October 2002

School's unique reference number: 108004

Head teacher: Mrs Patricia Richards

Inspector's name and number: Mr R D Masterton 483

School context

Christ Church Upper Armley Primary School serves a district characterised by widespread multiple deprivation. Over 25% of children receive free school meals, 24% are from ethnic minorities, 20% of children do not speak English at home, 12% have special educational needs and there is high mobility. At the same time the school retains the support of families with long ties to the inner urban community of Armley and the parish. The local church is adjacent to the school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Christ Church Upper Armley CE Primary School as a Church of England school are good

The school offers good provision for education which is both distinctive in its Christian ethos and inclusive of all children whatever their background. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children is sound and they grow to become articulate and thoughtful. They respect what they have been taught especially in relation to their growing awareness as responsible and caring members of their school community. The school can improve further through the greater development of the rôle of foundation governors in respect of their work to monitor, evaluate and offer challenge to managers, in order to develop the Christian expression of ethos and collective worship.

Established strengths

- A Christian ethos based on a shared consensus throughout the school community.
- The achievement and personal development of all children from diverse backgrounds and with varied learning needs.

Focus for development

- Strengthen the work of foundation governors to review and evaluate collective worship and the distinctiveness of Christ Church School.
- Ensure detailed planning captures existing good practice and experience to support all who may contribute to collective worship and informs the work of governors in exercising their responsibilities.

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

Ethos defines and inspires the work of staff and children at the school. Managers and governors seek to bring about educational achievement through identifying individual needs and responding to them through care. This ethos is firmly rooted in Christian beliefs and their interpretation in the context of the school. The school is demonstrably inclusive. Children affirm enthusiastically that they enjoy coming to school, are known individually, make good progress in their learning and develop as young people. "School has helped me to behave well and think of others", and "I have been helped with work I find hard" are typical examples of children speaking when asked about the way that school has helped them to grow up. Their personal development is evident in their understanding of the needs of others and their work for charities. Children know that they are

being taught in a church school. One parent described how questions from her children had renewed interest in her own faith. At Christ Church School all children make progress, often from a low starting point as the school cannot offer nursery provision. They reach average standards at the end of each key stage. The school environment provides an oasis for inspiration and learning. Each classroom is rich in display and stimulus for all areas of the curriculum. Carefully chosen themes powerfully inspire creativity, learning and enjoyment. A recent theme on Bollywood helped families of Asian origin to play a part in the work of the school, bringing and sharing their culture for all to understand and celebrate. A close relationship with the church brings additional voluntary support to help with children's learning. The Christian message is evident with the school prayer displayed in every classroom. Relationships between children and the adults who work with them, are good. All work harmoniously in the spirit of the weekly ethos messages that underpin the day-to-day life of the school. Managers and governors have secured a community consensus for the way the school achieves its purpose. It works. Year 6 children about to leave, describe maturely how pleased they are to have attended this school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Daily acts of collective worship are at the centre of school life and their themes are directly integrated into each week's special focus for the school ethos. They are led by managers, experienced teachers and staff from the parish church. This helps make the acts of worship memorable and enhances their impact. Children worship in the church once each month and there is a good attendance by parents and carers at the service held each Friday in school. No children are withdrawn. Acts of collective worship regularly include contributions from children, often in the form of drama, together with music, stories and prayers. Collective worship is the focus for all the school community, adults and children, with opportunities for reflection and prayer. The impact of collective worship is clearly evident through the ways in which children recall not only memorable occasions, but also the Christian messages. They recollected making Shrove Tuesday pancakes and were able to use this experience to help them remember the period of Lent and Jesus' period of reflection. An unusual demonstration of 'juggling' as part of a church service was fully understood in the context of a message about patience required for learning. Children are able to recall worship for Christmas and Easter including the basic historical events underpinning the Christian faith. However the church building with its furnishings and symbols is not fully exploited as a source of inspiration for worship. Planning of collective worship is insufficiently detailed to support all staff in contributing to its delivery or empowering governors to monitor and review content, scope and quality.

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

There is a very strong vision and drive from the head teacher and senior managers that has secured children's personal development and achievement, established the Christian ethos as the motor for school work, and made collective worship the focus of daily life in school. The head teacher has demonstrated much resilience enabling the school to operate effectively in a recent period of long term absence of permanent staff. Much strength has stemmed from the culture of commitment that has been engendered among all staff and helpers working in school. Links with the parish church are sound. - staff regularly lead collective worship for the school each week.. Managers have secured good communication to other faith communities in the locality but links with the local mosque are at an early stage of development. Parents, including those of other faiths, recognise the Christian character of the school, support the values it teaches and are pleased that their children attend. Foundation governors cherish and support the work of the school but do not fully undertake their rôles to monitor, evaluate and challenge the provision for collective worship and distinctiveness. This is depriving the school of a lever for further improvement.