

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Christ Church Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Walshaw

Church Street,
Walshaw,
Bury
BL8 3AX

Diocese: Manchester

Local Authority: Bury

Date of inspection: 18th September 2007

Date of last inspection: 31st March – 2nd April 2003

School's unique reference number: 105341

Headteacher: Mr Ian Young

Inspector's name and number: Reverend Maureen Read 451

School context

Christ Church Primary School serves families with a mix of social and economic backgrounds. It is a slightly larger than average-sized school with 245 child places as well as a 25 f.t.e. nursery. Most children are from white British homes. The number of children with special educational needs or in receipt of free school meals is below the national average. The school is set in the village of Walshaw, a semi-rural district of Bury. It benefits from extensive, well-maintained grounds.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Christ Church as a Church of England school are outstanding

Supported by the 'Excellence and Enjoyment' and 'Every Child Matters' agendas, the school promotes a child-centred philosophy based on the Christian values of respect, care, love of God and of one another and respect for the environment. These contribute significantly to a calm, supportive, happy and healthy environment where learning and encouraging one another are paramount, even from an early age. Excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural developments link through all the curriculum areas leading children to see God in all things.

Established strengths

- The supportive, caring relationships between every member of the school community.
- The long-term vision, rooted in Christian values, held by all those involved in leadership.
- The strong partnership between school, home, church and local community.

Focus for development

- To continue the development of innovative ways of delivering the RE curriculum through sharing good practice and training developments for all staff.
- To introduce an 'Eco-Council', thus complementing both the work of the School Council and Healthy School Status.

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

The excellent quality of caring relationships between all members of the school community has a positive, pervasive impact on the children's achievements and their sense of self worth. All children feel valued and special, they enjoy coming to school and are very grateful for all the extra activities that the school offers them. All children progress extremely well. Junior pupils were able to articulate clearly their hopes and aspirations for their future careers; they realize what they have to do to achieve their full potential and are willing to rise to the challenges posed by their teachers. Children in Year 5 can choose to have the extra responsibility of caring for younger pupils through the system of playground buddies. They provide an excellent role model to the younger children. Year 6 have the opportunity to apply for specific areas of additional responsibility, such as librarians and worship monitors. This has had an impact throughout the entire junior department, seen in the excellent standard of behaviour and commitment, as the younger children eagerly move towards those ranks of

maturity. The school excels in the way it considers the needs of others who are less fortunate than them, both locally and across the world. Each year significant amounts of money are raised for a wide variety of charities. The school is housed in two buildings; but, even within the constraints of the old school, space is maximized and utilized exceptionally well. The outside grounds are extensive. The School Council played a strategic part in their development for play. All children feel privileged to have the equipment and well-designed, designated areas for them to enjoy.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective Worship is a vitally important feature of the school in which there is an unspoken expectation of exemplary behaviour for all participants. All worship is of a very high quality, continually enriching, inspiring and affirming the lives of the whole school community. There is strong evidence of enjoyment of worship through enthusiastic singing, quiet reflection and well-thought-out responses to questioning and participation through music and drama. Year groups lead worship, which they plan and deliver, using power point presentations with confidence. Children in the Foundation Unit experience their own teacher-led worship within a secure family group. Through a multi-sensory approach of incorporating actions alongside the use of visual stimuli they quickly learn the words to cheery hymns and songs. They were beginning to recite their school prayer. Resources used in worship have the impact of adding to the spiritual atmosphere where the presence of God is acknowledged and celebrated. Worship takes place in the Parish Church at key points in the Christian year; led not only by the Vicar but also by teachers and children. Children are exposed to a wealth and a variety of styles within the Christian framework. Displays around the school are all of a very high standard and quality, reinforcing its Christian ethos and encouraging children to write their own prayers for different situations. Prayer is a major feature within the daily life of the school; this has encouraged all children to become both compassionate and responsible people and contributes strongly to their spiritual development.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The high expectations shown by teachers lead the children to make very good progress. Imaginative and challenging teaching provides some excellent learning and interactive white boards are used very creatively to link prior knowledge with new targets. All children deepen their understanding very well through role-play experiences. Learning from religion is strongly emphasized with RE being linked, where appropriate, into other curriculum areas and vice versa. Through this approach the children are helped to see and experience God in all things. Teaching based on the Bible within the Foundation stage enables children to explore feelings and emotions well, whilst also developing the sense of right and wrong. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic about his work. Overall, Religious Education is a very important feature of the school's distinctiveness.

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

The school is led and managed excellently through a distinctive Christian vision offered by the head teacher, his leadership team and the governing body. Close working relationships, collaboration and co-operation have provided mutual support and a respect for the variety of individual gifts offered by those who lead. The School Council is comprised of children and one teacher and it plays a big part in decision-making. The children involved see it as a responsible position and an honour in representing their peers. The school is very good at gathering and responding to the views of all involved, including parents and children. The results of questionnaires and discussions all show a very high level of satisfaction with the school. Links between the church, the school and the local community are very strong. Members of the governing body are also active members of the church; this has a mutual benefit in that both school and church are seen as high priority by one other. Governors have a clear focus for monitoring and evaluating all that the school offers. They are involved in completing the Diocesan Toolkit. They fully support the vision of the head teacher whilst offering him the challenge to improve the school further. The Vicar not only leads worship but also provides a valued presence within the daily life of the school. The school has successfully maintained and, in many areas, exceeded its earlier high standards.

SIAS Report September 2007 Christ Church; Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Church Street, Walshaw, Bury, BL8 3AX