

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Church, St Nicholas Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

St Nicholas Road,  
Dill Hall Lane  
Church,  
Accrington  
Lancashire  
BB5 4DT

<b>Diocese:</b>	<b>Blackburn</b>
Local authority:	Lancashire
Dates of inspection:	3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2008
Date of last inspection:	February, 2005
School's unique reference number:	119447
Headteacher:	Mr J N W Walker
Inspector's name and number:	Rev W Sloan (521)

#### **School context**

St Nicholas is an average sized primary school. The majority of pupils live within walking distance of the school with a small number travelling from further afield. The school is situated within 20 minutes walking distance of the two Churches. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average as is the number entitled to free school meals.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Nicholas C of E (Aided) Primary School as a Church of England school are good.**

The school's Christian character permeates all aspects of school life. Its Christian principles of love and respect are actively promoted making a significant impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children are caring, concerned and responsible members of their community and have been inspired by the Christian teaching and ethos of their school.

#### **Established strengths**

- The outstanding quality of the relationships between all members of the school community has a significant impact on pupils' personal development.
- The quality of collective worship makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.
- The school's distinctive character enables all pupils to grow in their understanding of the Christian faith
- The strong relationships established between the school, church and local community.

#### **Focus for development**

- In Religious Education use assessment procedures to inform pupils of how they could improve by giving them a clear view of their progress.
- Involve all members of the school community in carrying out an evaluation of the school's distinctiveness and effectiveness as a church school.
- Establish strategies for the evaluation of collective worship which involve pupils, staff and governors.

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

The school's mission statement, "To provide a Christian setting in which children can realise their full potential and maximise their academic achievement" underpins everything the

school sets out to do. The work of the Learning Mentors makes a positive impact on developing a caring Christian ethos throughout the school. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are outstanding. Christian principles and values are promoted well. All relationships are based on love, care and respect towards others. Pupils are polite and well mannered. There is a warm, caring family atmosphere within school and parents speak enthusiastically about this. Pupils enjoy school and are happy. They are well motivated and are keen and eager to learn. Staff work hard to ensure that all pupils are encouraged to develop as individuals and to reach their full potential. There is an effective school council. Representatives are articulate and proactive within the life of the school. They feel comfortable in expressing their views and they feel their suggestions are valued and are taken seriously. Pupils respond positively to the high standards of behaviour and achievement encouraged by the headteacher and staff. The older pupils engage with the younger pupils at play times ensuring everyone has someone to play with. They are also involved in developing the school's grounds for the benefit of everyone. The vicars from the two churches are regular visitors to the school and are well known by pupils, staff and parents. These links with the churches and the community enhance the school's Christian character. Representatives from the parish church help in school on a regular basis which further enhances the local links. Parents regard the staff and headteacher as approachable people who listen. They also feel the school has a special quality that provides their children with a strong sense of identity, a caring attitude and an appropriate sense of responsibility. They appreciate their children's understanding of Christian values, which are evident in their response to those with different cultures to their own.

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

Worship plays an important part in the life of the school. The headteacher and clergy plan programmes of worship together which helps to avoid overlap. Themes reflect the Church's calendar as well as supporting areas being explored in RE lessons. On the day of inspection the theme for worship was 'Trusting in God.' Some pupils responded well to the questions asked while others were actively involved in demonstrating 'trust.' The time of worship concluded with the pupils and staff singing a reflective song. This made a significant contribution to the spiritual development of pupils and staff. Worship is delivered by a range of staff and clergy in school and in the church. During the inspection, Worship catered for the needs of all pupils and reflected the broader programme of worship. The lighting of a candle and the use of visual prompts created an atmosphere conducive to worship, adding to the quality of provision. Pupils have a positive attitude to Collective Worship. The attendance of all staff at worship offers pupils good role models and emphasises the importance of this shared time together as a Christian family. The large wooden cross and the worship table provide a clear focal point. However the school does not have in place a system to evaluate its effectiveness as a Church school.

**The effectiveness of the religious education is good.**

Children are positive about their religious education lessons and achieve good standards. They show good knowledge of the Christian faith and the church year. They are confident in expressing both their knowledge and their opinions. Lessons are well planned, and take into account different learning styles. Children's spiritual and moral awareness is developed through the reflective activities they are given during these times. They can express clearly what they have learnt from as well as learnt about religion. One example is in their learning about prayer and how this relates to their own experiences. In one lesson the pupils were able to talk about different ways to pray and to reflect on the value of prayer in their lives. Pupils clearly enjoy the different teaching strategies and approaches. The RE co-ordinator monitors the effectiveness of this subject and has correctly identified that the assessment of children's learning, including their own self-assessment, is the next area for development. This will ensure continuity and progression in learning. A portfolio of assessed work has already made a significant impact on this area.

**The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is good.**

The headteacher, staff and foundation governors articulate a clear Christian vision for the school. They provide excellent leadership and work in effective partnership to promote a distinctively Christian ethos. All staff are valued by the children, parents, leadership team and

governors. Members of the school community are justly proud of their school and work very hard to ensure high standards in all areas. This has been achieved through the hard work and dedication of the headteacher. Over the years he has created an environment rich in Christian ethos and values that children, parents and governors value greatly. New staff are chosen carefully and supported in putting the vision into practical action. The involvement of parents and pupils' in monitoring the progress of the school is recorded in regular questionnaires. However governors do not have formal strategies in place to evaluate the distinctiveness of the school as a Church school.

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