

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Cop Lane Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Penwortham

Cop Lane,
Penwortham,
Preston,
Lancashire
PR1 9AE

Diocese: Blackburn

Local authority: Lancashire

Dates of inspection: 6th December 2007

Date of last inspection: November 2003

School's unique reference number: 119363

Headteacher: Miss P. Carter

Inspector's name and number: Miss Heather Starkie – NS 179

School context

Cop Lane Church of England Primary School is situated in Penwortham, on the outskirts of Preston. The school was founded in 1828 and moved to its present site in 1878. The building has been considerably extended and upgraded during more recent years. There are currently 192 children on roll. The children are predominantly of White British ethnicity and are from mixed socio economic backgrounds. The school undertook a change of status from voluntary controlled to voluntary aided in April 2005. Although located some distance from St Mary's Church Penwortham, the school has a very good relationship with the church community.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Cop Lane as a Church of England school are good.

The school has a distinctively Christian character which permeates all aspects of school life and has a significant impact upon the personal and spiritual development of the children. Christian principles and values are promoted effectively and underpin the strong Christian ethos which is clearly evident within the daily life of the school.

Established strengths

- The strong Christian ethos which underpins the work of the school and permeates all aspects of school life.
- The high quality acts of worship and their significant contribution to the spiritual development of children and staff.
- The promotion of children's spiritual development through RE and through other areas of the curriculum.
- The clear vision of the headteacher and leadership team and their success in embedding Christian values within the daily life of the school.

Focus for development

- To raise expectations and standards of written work within RE to better reflect the children's very good knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith.
- To develop the use of assessment within RE to ensure all children are sufficiently challenged.
- To refine school self evaluation procedures in order to involve governors, children and parents in evaluating RE, Collective Worship and the school's distinctiveness and effectiveness as a church school.

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

The strong, distinctive Christian ethos is at the very heart of school life and contributes significantly to the all round development of each individual child. Displays around school portray very well, to the whole school community, the message that the school has a strong Christian foundation. Worship displays are evident in all classrooms with prayers, sentences and questions which allow children to think and to reflect, promoting their spiritual development. All relationships within the school community are characterised by Christian care and concern for others. The school is fully committed to the Every Child Matters agenda and prides itself on the pastoral care and support it provides. Christian principles and values are promoted extremely well through the personal, social and emotional development of the children using the SEAL materials. Effective displays demonstrate some very good work and thoughtful discussion. Children enjoy school and are happy at school. Their achievements are valued and are celebrated within the special weekly celebration assembly. The school works hard to promote respect for others. Children are taught the difference between right and wrong and a range of strategies are in place to promote good behaviour including weekly "Good Manners Awards", "Merit Badges", "Golden Book" and the lunch time behaviour award "Be my Guest". The school has recently received a learning excellence award for innovative practice on Anti Bullying work. The children organise a range of fundraising activities on a regular basis, enabling them to show respect and consideration towards those who are less fortunate. The school has recently developed links with "Pencott School" in Uganda. The children have been involved in raising money for the school and Year 6 have established "pen pals" with some of the older children. Children's spiritual development is outstanding. Many opportunities are provided for children to experience times of stillness and quiet, and to reflect across all curriculum areas. An excellent example of this was observed within a Key Stage Two literacy lesson. Children had to put themselves into the role of an African slave and were encouraged to think about how they would feel in this situation and respond appropriately. Children's cultural development is promoted well. Other world faiths are studied as part of the RE curriculum. Children are aware of Christianity as a multi cultural faith and are able to talk about the importance of Christianity in other parts of the world.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.

Worship has a significant impact in promoting the Christian character of the school and developing children's knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. Worship each day is an important feature of school life and is respected and enjoyed by the children and all members of the school community. Worship is planned using clear, Christian themes and provides children with a range of experiences. During worship children listen attentively and are actively involved, particularly through drama and role play. They respond well to prayers and sing with enthusiasm and clarity. Elements of Anglican liturgy are incorporated into the worship which helps to develop children's understanding of Anglican faith and practice. The setting and ambiance for worship are excellent. Very attractive paintings of Jesus, The Holy Spirit and God in Creation provide an effective focal point for worship within the school hall, together with a candle, a cross and a selection of prayers and sentences from the Bible. Excellent opportunities for the promotion of children's spiritual development are provided within worship. These include the use of quiet, reflective music, the projection of images and thought provoking phrases and sentences onto a large screen through powerpoint presentations and the inclusion of individual prayer and reflection. The headteacher, who is also the worship co-ordinator, has a very clear vision of the role of prayer and worship within the school. She ensures worship impacts fully on both children and adults alike. Staff, governors and other visitors within worship are not just "bystanders" – they participate fully within the worship and feel they benefit spiritually from their involvement. The school has a close relationship with the church. The Vicar and Foundation Governors are very supportive of the school and work hard to establish and maintain effective links between the school and the church. The geographical distance between the school and the church is not viewed as a barrier – rather it is seen as an opportunity to develop more creative links. The school participates in the Harvest Service, the Christmas Carol Service and the Education Sunday Service. Various classes within the school undertake day visits to the church, supporting their work in RE as well as personal and social development. The PCC regularly discuss the work of the school within their meetings and parishioners visit school on various occasions. The

church presents individual Bibles to all children as they move into Key Stage Two. These Bibles are used during their remaining time within Cop Lane school as well as in their future lives at High School and beyond.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

Children demonstrate a good knowledge of the Christian faith and are able to express their understanding in articulate and thought provoking ways. The RE curriculum follows the Blackburn Diocesan syllabus and is largely Christian based, reflecting the character of the school. Studies of other world faiths supplement units of work within the RE curriculum, enhancing children's knowledge and understanding of other cultures and traditions. RE is taught in a variety of ways including drama, shared discussion, role play and practical activities. Lessons observed within the inspection were both fun and interactive. Within Key Stage One the children took on the role of the shepherds and explored their thoughts and feelings as they heard the good news of the birth of Jesus. Within Key Stage Two, excellent use was made of ICT to support the teaching and learning and very good questioning skills were demonstrated, enhancing children's spiritual development. However, children are not always challenged in terms of their written work within RE. Expectations with regards to standards of written work are low and presentation of work is often of poor quality. Procedures for assessing children's work within RE are at an early stage of development. They are not fully embedded or used consistently across the school. The Subject Leader for RE, has a very good understanding of her role in supporting the teaching of RE within the school. She effectively shares the leadership with a Higher Level Teaching Assistant who delivers a significant proportion of the Key Stage Two RE curriculum. Some monitoring and evaluation of RE takes place as part of the school's self evaluation procedures. However, this is an ongoing area for further development within the current school improvement plan, particularly to incorporate a more structured programme of lesson observations.

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

Governors, alongside the headteacher and leadership team, were instrumental in managing, very effectively, the change in status from Voluntary Controlled to Voluntary Aided in 2005. This was an important stage of development for the school, reflecting the full commitment of the leadership and management to the distinctive Christian ethos of the school. Although the school previously had a good Christian foundation, progress towards the further development of the school as a church school has been significant during the past two years. The headteacher and leadership team have a clear, distinctive Christian vision for the school and are fully committed to developing and promoting the Christian ethos and character in all areas of school life. The very good team spirit which exists helps staff and children to feel they are part of a caring and Christian community. The Mission Statement clearly reflects the Christian foundation and character of the school and underpins the work of the school. An evaluation of the school's distinctiveness and effectiveness as a church school has been undertaken by the headteacher and leadership team. Outcomes of this evaluation have been shared with staff and have been incorporated within the School Improvement Plan. Governors are supportive of the school and share the headteacher's vision and sense of purpose. Foundation Governors work hard to ensure school and church links are maintained and further developed. Governors are not sufficiently involved in evaluating the effectiveness of the school as a church school, including the impact of worship and the standards achieved within RE. Parents on the Parent Council are very supportive and appreciate the way in which the school provides a caring, Christian environment where children are happy and enjoy their learning. Involvement of parents in evaluating the effectiveness of the school as a church school, are currently limited. There is an established and effective School Council which enables the leadership team to gather the children's views. Children feel their suggestions are valued and are taken seriously. Representatives currently serving on the Council are articulate and make important and worthwhile contributions to the further development of the school. The school has identified the involvement of children in the evaluation of RE and Collective Worship as an area for future development.

