

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Hebden Royd Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Church Lane
Hebden Royd
West Yorkshire
HX7 6DS

Diocese: Wakefield

Local authority: Calderdale

Dates of inspection: 4th July 2007

Date of last inspection: 2003

School's unique reference number: 107551

Headteacher: Gretl Young

Inspector's name and number: Alan Thornsby 137

School context

Hebden Royd is a small Victorian built school that has recently had an increase in its numbers. Most pupils are White British, with two having English as a second language. The head was appointed in September 2006.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Hebden Royd School as a Church of England school is good.

This is because the school has a caring ethos in which respect and support are key factors. There are very effective links with St James church and the local community to give pupils a secure understanding of Christianity, whilst at the same time increasing their knowledge and understanding of other world faiths. Pupils are well prepared for living as future citizens.

Established strengths

- The impact made by the new headteacher in raising the aspirations of the whole school community
- The links between the school and St James Church
- The effective links between RE and worship that increase pupil knowledge and awareness.

Focus for development

- To recognise and celebrate the distinctiveness of the school as a church school and use this to inform future developments.
- To ensure monitoring and evaluation of religious education is used to continue to raise standards

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

The schools mission statement refers to the support of St James Church in providing a caring atmosphere within the school and community. The Christian ethos clearly shapes the curriculum through the links that are forged between worship and religious education. Pupils speak of a safe and happy school where they learn how to live their lives because they explore the stories Jesus told. Their excellent behaviour means they are well mannered and friendly. Pupils describe how friendships in school are secure because they are very aware of forgiveness. The school is welcoming and caring and there is a spiritual element to the high quality displays through the use of reflective questions and posters that affirm good behaviour. Pupils respond well to the range of incentives to promote good behaviour and attitudes. Tracking and monitoring of pupils enables them to make good progress. Good use is made of teaching assistants to support less able pupils in the introductions to religious education lessons. The school environment does not yet fully reflect its Christian foundation because there has been no exploration of how different parts of the building could offer

places to pray or reflect. Pupils show care for the wider community by supporting local and national charities, including sponsoring the education of a child in Cambodia.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship has a central role in school and sets the tone for each day with a quiet reflective time. Planning makes good use of the ideas found in 'Values for Life' and the themes for worship are given a strong Christian context. Good use is made of opportunities to follow up these ideas throughout the school day, and values such as mutual love and respect really influence the daily life of the school. Worship is organised in different ways and this helps children of different ages and varied interests to respond. Pupils come together in key stages and on certain days for singing or celebration assemblies. The key factor is that leaders are lively and engage pupils' interests so that they respond to the challenge of applying Christian values to the way they behave. They appreciate the importance of a distinctive atmosphere for worship and enter the hall quietly listening to music. They value this time and describe it as 'the place to ask God 'to make life happy' or 'to share achievement with other people'

The effectiveness of Religious Education is good

The policy for RE has recently been revised and this has raised its profile in the school. Changes in the way the subject is taught are already making an impact on pupils' responses and standards are beginning to improve. The new scheme takes account of 'Values education' and diocesan guidelines, encourages creativity and the use of pupils skills in ICT. Large blocks of time are now allocated to RE and this means that children study in greater depth because they make links to worship and other subjects. Pupils are very positive about being involved in RE to overcome challenges. They explain the use of drama and writing play scripts for example because 'it is better than a book. Doing what you're learning makes you a part of it and you understand it better.' Teaching is often good because questioning is used effectively to develop children's understanding and pupils value their learning because 'it is important to learn about God and other faiths'. Their own experiences are valued and this raises self-esteem. One child, for example, who had attended a Muslim school, shared her knowledge of a Muslim washing ritual. Teachers are now confident that pupils' knowledge of different beliefs is improving. They have devised a format for end of unit assessment that will provide them with information about the rate of children's progress. Initial results indicate that standards are in line with national expectations.

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

The newly appointed headteacher has raised the expectations of the whole school community. She has communicated her enthusiasm to the staff who have been inspired to work together in the drive to raise standards. The change in culture is recognised by parents, who see a difference in how their children enjoy school. The new school motto 'Aim high together' already reflects the direction in which the school is moving. Pastoral support for staff and parents is provided by the vicar, who is also a teaching resource for aspects of RE. The governing body is very supportive of the headteacher and staff and recognise that recent improvements are already secure. Although conscious of being a church school and having an informal role in monitoring worship, governors have yet to be involved in evaluating the impact of the distinctive character of the school as a church school. This means there is no strategic view for how to develop as a church school, in spite of the shared vision that is in place. Positive links with the adjacent church are well established. This ensures that children feel part of a worshipping community. The bridge linking the two sites is a symbol of the spiritual support that is provided. The school holds its celebration assembly in church every week, so children are familiar with the building as a place of worship. The school contributes to the life of the wider community by singing for all age worship in church and at local care homes.