

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Heskin Pemberton's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Withington Lane,
Heskin,
Chorley
PR7 5LU

Diocese: Blackburn

Local authority: Lancashire

Dates of inspection: 12th December 2007

Date of last inspection: January 2004

School's unique reference number: 119475

Headteacher: Mrs Anne Grew

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

School context

Heskin Pemberton's Church of England Primary School is a small village school situated on the outskirts of Chorley. The school serves the village of Heskin together with several other neighbouring villages. There are currently 83 children on roll. The children are from supportive, middle class backgrounds with almost all of the children having attended local private nurseries prior to beginning their formal education.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Heskin Pemberton's as a Church of England school are good.

The school promotes a strong distinctive Christian ethos and Christian principles and values underpin the work of the school. All children are valued and are encouraged to develop as individuals within a caring, supportive and stimulating environment.

Established strengths

- The way in which the school promotes Christian principles and values.
- The ethos of care and respect for others which underpins the work of the school.
- The commitment of the leadership and management to the development of the Christian ethos and the promotion of the Christian faith within the school.
- The very effective subject leader for RE and her commitment to providing an effective RE curriculum.

Focus for development

- To formulate a whole school, structured approach to the development of children's knowledge and understanding of other world faiths and cultures.
- To develop standards and quality of written work within RE.
- To ensure worship is planned and evaluated in more structured ways, involving both staff and children.

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

There is a strong, distinctive Christian ethos which permeates all aspects of school life. The Christian character is evident within the whole school environment. Christian principles and values are promoted effectively and have a positive impact on the personal and social development of the children. There is a warm and welcoming family atmosphere. All relationships within the school community are characterised by Christian care and concern for others. "Caring leaves" for the younger children and "care and consideration stickers" for the older children are awarded each week, reflecting the Christian ethos of love, care and respect for others. Staff encourage all children to develop as individuals, enabling them to achieve their full potential within a supportive Christian environment. Children with special

educational needs are supported well and all children feel valued and special. Children's work and achievements are celebrated through effective displays within classrooms and around school. The weekly "Star Assembly" also provides opportunities to acknowledge children's successes both within school as well as outside of school. Older children take responsibility for a variety of roles including looking after the younger children at playtimes and lunchtimes. The school promotes children's spiritual development effectively. A selection of photographs on display in the hall encourages children to reflect on the wonder of God's creation. Prayer is an important feature of school life, both within worship and outside of worship. Prayers are said at lunchtime and at the end of the school day. Children are encouraged to write their own prayers for use in worship. "Prayer bags" are available in the hall enabling children to think about the world in which they live and providing opportunities for them to offer their own prayers on a range of focus areas. Children are polite and well mannered. They have a sound understanding of right and wrong and clear rules are laid down for them to follow in order to encourage good behaviour. Opportunities to promote children's knowledge and understanding of other cultures and other world faiths are currently limited. However, this has already been identified by the school as an area for further development.

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

Collective Worship enables the children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith and contributes well to the teaching of Christian principles and values. The main Christian festivals are celebrated and worship follows clear, Christian themes. However, there is no structured planning of worship within each of the themes and the impact of worship is therefore limited. Worship provides children with a range of experiences including stories, times of prayer and some opportunities for quiet reflection. A focal point for worship incorporating a cross and a candle helps to promote children's spiritual development. Elements of Anglican liturgy are incorporated into the worship. This helps to develop children's understanding of Anglican faith and practice. Children enjoy worship and speak positively about it. They listen attentively. They respond well to prayers and sing with enthusiasm. Involvement of the children in planning, leading and evaluating worship is currently limited. Worship is regarded as an important feature of school life. However, it is not a distinct element of school self evaluation and school development planning. Worship is currently monitored and evaluated as part of the RE curriculum and forms part of the RE subject action plan. There are close links between the school and the church. Church and school support each other extremely well, particularly at significant times within the life of both the church and the school. School attends church to celebrate the main Christian festivals. Samples of children's work are displayed within the church and the school contributes to the monthly church magazine. Church members are invited to "Open Days" and special assemblies. The vicar leads worship in school each week. He has developed a very good relationship and a good rapport with the children. He also supports work within RE.

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 a mature and respectful way. The RE curriculum follows the Blackburn Diocesan syllabus and is largely Christian based, reflecting the character of the school. Studies of other world faiths are currently limited and are not fully integrated into the whole school curriculum plan for RE. Standards of attainment within RE are in line with standards achieved in other subject areas. However, children are not always challenged in terms of their written work within RE. RE is taught in a range of creative ways including discussion, drama, role play and practical activities. Children enjoy RE lessons and are encouraged to share their own thoughts and experiences. Children's spiritual development is promoted within RE lessons. Opportunities are also provided whereby children can empathise with other people's feelings in different situations. During the inspection a good lesson was observed within Key Stage One involving children taking on the role of each of the characters in the Christmas story, thinking and asking questions linked to "Why was the stable so full on the night Jesus was born?". Very good links were made within the lesson to the work the children had been doing in literacy. Procedures for assessing children's work in RE have been introduced and are being used to monitor children's progress on a half termly basis.

The RE subject leader has a very clear vision, is very effective in her role and is fully committed to the further development of RE. Until recently, she has been responsible for teaching RE across the school. Class teachers are now teaching RE within their own classes. Whole staff training, enhancing staff subject knowledge and self confidence within this area of the curriculum, has not been undertaken. However, staff are following the very detailed and structured plans provided by the RE subject leader, ensuring continuity and progression across the school.

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

The headteacher and leadership team have a clear, distinctive Christian vision and are fully committed to developing and promoting the Christian ethos and character of the school. The school's Mission Statement and aims reflect the foundation of the school. The children were involved in formulating the Mission Statement and it is phrased in "child friendly" language. They are able to talk about the Mission Statement in a clear, articulate way and it is displayed around the school. There is an established School Council which enables the leadership team to gather the children's views. Children's views are listened to and, where appropriate, acted upon. The children feel their suggestions are valued and are taken seriously. Governors are involved in the life of the school and are very supportive. They share the headteacher's Christian vision and are effective in ensuring the Christian foundation is reflected and promoted within the daily life of the school. An evaluation of the school's distinctiveness and effectiveness as a church school has been undertaken and areas for further development have been included within the school's action plans and school improvement plans. Parents are very supportive and appreciate the way in which the school promotes Christian principles and values and provides a caring, Christian environment where children are happy and enjoy their learning.