

# National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

## **Highburton Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School**

Northfield Lane,  
Highburton,  
Huddersfield,  
HD8 0QT,  
West Yorkshire

**Diocese: Wakefield**

Local authority: Kirklees

Date of inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> December 2008

Date of last inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> November 2005

School's unique reference number: 107715

Headteacher: Mrs Lynne Rutter

Inspector's name and number: Denise Brogden 486

### **School context**

Highburton Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School currently has 174 children on role. The school is at the heart of the village community of Highburton, a few miles from the centre of Huddersfield. The catchment is predominantly owner occupied in a range of private housing. Attainment on entry is broadly average for the majority of pupils. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average. The school holds Investors in People, Healthy Schools, Activemark and Artsmark Gold.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Highburton Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School as a Church of England School are outstanding**

Highburton Church of England VC First School is an outstanding school that reflects its Christian Foundation well. It aims to 'offer the children in our care the highest standard of education we can give'. The values of the school are clearly stated within the prospectus highlighting that 'we are a Church School and we see what we believe to be Christian behaviour whenever we look at our children sharing, laughing, reading, thinking, swapping, talking, walking, giving and forgiving arm in arm together'. The effectiveness is enhanced by the commitment of the head teacher, staff, governors and members of the local church community to see Christian principles in practice.

### **Established strengths**

- The Christian ethos, clearly recognised by all the stakeholders, permeates all of school life and has an outstanding effect on relationships within school.
- The pupils recognise that school is a place where they feel safe, secure and very well looked after. Pupils acknowledge they will be well supported through any difficult times they may experience.
- Resources and displays give excellent support to religious education and general learning and have an outstanding effect on the quality of spiritual reflection.
- There are productive and supportive links with the local Church community.

### **Focus for development**

- To explore and appreciate how there might be more meaningful involvement by other Christian denominations and other faith groups especially in acts of worship.
- To build on the evaluation of worship already undertaken by pupils by encouraging a more detailed reflection on the impact of worship for them.

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

The school is strongly committed to the nurture and care of its pupils promoted through clear Christian principles. Parent governors say 'nurture and care genuinely oozes out of everywhere in this school'. Prominent whole school displays encourage all pupils to 'aim high and reach for the stars' and the 'Wish Tree' encourages pupils to reflect on something they would wish for. Pupils respond with 'I wish everyone in the world has food and shelter', 'I wish the world would be a better place'. Pupils have enormous trust in adults to support them. They recognise the care given by all members of the school community and recognise that it is a caring school where they always feel safe. The role of play leaders helps new pupils to 'feel comfortable' in the school. Pupils say adults 'are really nice, they comfort you when you are down'. Pupils are encouraged to develop very high expectations in their learning and particularly in their behaviour. They have high expectations for their futures, aiming for careers as paramedics and vets so they can 'help others'. Pupils say they enjoy school and clearly take their role as school councillors seriously. They say they know they are part of a church school because of the school logo, they understand the cross on the logo to represent the need to 'play nicely with others'. They recognise the school as a Church school because they 'learn about God' and see Christian symbols around school. There are excellent and exemplary relationships evident throughout the school, characterised by Christian care and concern for others and a desire to live out the aims of the school. This is particularly recognised in the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs.

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

Daily collective worship clearly plays an important part in the life of the school and it provides an affirming experience for pupils, staff and visitors. The aim of worship is to provide 'a special time where a positive contribution can be made to the spiritual development of all pupils'. Parents say that the distinctiveness of this school as a Church school can be experienced in the acts of worship where pupils are taught Christian songs, hear stories from the Bible and they learn to say the Lord's Prayer. Acts of worship are well planned by the worship co-ordinator who provides themes for other staff to follow. All teachers are involved in delivering acts of worship and much thought has gone into how to engage pupils of different ages and abilities. Pupils clearly enjoy the opportunities to spend time as a whole school in collective worship listening, singing, reflecting and praying. Younger pupils recognise that they pray to God 'to hope for a good day'. A school prayer is said in worship and this is prominently displayed in the entrance to school. Pupils say they enjoy writing their own prayers. The school council recognised the importance of collective worship in the life of the school as they hear stories about God and Jesus and the stories 'teach us about being kind to others'. The behaviour in worship is very good and pupils showed much eagerness to sing and join in the activities, especially those involving the re-enactment of a story. Different members of the school community are invited to choose the music that is playing when pupils enter the hall for worship. Pupils are actively involved in evaluating acts of worship. There are good links with the local church and members of the local clergy have given much thought on how to enthusiastically engage the pupils in acts of worship.

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

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team provide a very strong lead and have the ability to inspire, being committed to promoting a distinctive Christian vision for the school. The Governors know the school very well and they work with staff in close partnership. Foundation governors say that the key to the school is the Christian 'ethos' which can be evidenced in the way pupils care for each other and their surroundings and also in the self-esteem of the pupils. The ethos of the school is shared, understood and very well supported by all members of the school community. Parents speak confidently of how Christian values pervade school life and this can be seen in pupils wanting to reflect on and understand world events and in wanting to help a range of different charities. School and church links are continually developing and discussions for forging closer links are a priority for both school and the church community. The church is currently going through an interregnum but links are still in place and everyone at school and in the church community are working creatively to continue these links. The school choir sings at special church services and some services, such as the Christingle service, are shared with parents through school newsletters. The

school and church celebrate Education Sunday together along with another local church primary school. The school welcomes suggestions and contributions from all members of the school community. The voice of children is consistently sought regarding all aspects of their learning.

SIAS report December 14th 2008. Highburton CE VC First School, Northfield Lane, Highburton, Huddersfield, HD8 0QT.