

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Hob Hill, Church of England / Methodist Voluntary Controlled Primary School,
Armitage Lane,
Brereton,
Rugeley,
Staffordshire,
WS15 1ED

Diocese: Lichfield; Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury Methodist District

LEA: Staffordshire

Date of inspection: 29th September 2006

Date of last inspection: 13th March, 2000

School's Unique reference number: 124291

Name of Headteacher: Mr. Andrew Brakes

Inspectors' name & National Society number: Neville Norcross (403)

Context of the school

The school is slightly smaller than average. Fewer pupils than average have learning difficulties and the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The vast majority of pupils are White British. The school has recently experienced a significant building programme in order to cater for a larger number of pupils. This has meant that there has been some disruption to the normal routines of the school. This is the only joint Church of England/ Methodist school in Staffordshire.

Summary Judgement

Hob Hill is a satisfactory Church of England/Methodist Primary School.

It is a happy school with a strong family atmosphere of which the children are proud. However, it has yet to clarify and communicate its vision as a Christian school.

Established strengths

- The very good relationships within the school community
- The children are "cherished, well-loved and cared for," which enables them to demonstrate a high degree of care for one another
- The open and friendly attitude of the children to everyone within the school community

Focus for development

- Put into place a whole school approach to the evaluation of the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a Church of England/ Methodist school.
- Take into account, the views of parents/carers, clergy from both churches and children when mapping the school's future as a Christian school.
- Expand the opportunities for spiritual development, both in worship and throughout the life of the school.
- Put into place a system for evaluating school worship, which involves the pupils and clergy from both churches.

The impact of the distinctive Christian character of the school in meeting the needs of learners is satisfactory

The children feel that they are greatly valued as individuals. They say that their achievements are recognised and celebrated. They are confident in the fact that the staff listen to them and act upon their suggestions and their concerns. The children are polite and well-mannered and enjoy each other's company in the playground and elsewhere around school. There is a strong emphasis on care for individual children

although it is not made clear to the children or to others that the policy for behaviour is based upon Christian values such as reconciliation and forgiveness. The children have a high level of self esteem but the Christian basis for this is not made clear within the school community. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. They have a strong sense of right and wrong and are proud to belong to their school community. They show a responsibility for the local and the wider community and their fund-raising for a variety of charities is commendable. The school's plans to introduce a School Council will provide an opportunity for the children to have a greater say in the way in which their school is run. The children learn about cultures other than their own through the programme of religious education and through initiatives such as the African drumming. However, the opportunity to meet people from a range of cultural backgrounds is limited. The children have opportunities for quiet reflection through the daily act of worship. However there are some lost opportunities for spiritual development both in worship and through the school environment. The quality of relationships between pupils and pupils and pupils and staff is very good. The new school building and the surrounding grounds provide a pleasant working environment but more could be done to develop the quiet areas, interactive displays and Christian symbols which will enhance the pupils' spiritual development. The new Nursery is already having an impact on the school's ability to meet the needs of all pupils. The value which is placed on religious education has a positive impact on the pupils' views of the subject.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

The importance of the daily act of worship is recognised but not fully developed. The school has provided a focus table in order to establish the importance of worship and the co-ordinator has made a very good start in the development of a rolling programme of themes. There is some involvement of the clergy in the planning of these themes. Rev. Wendy and Fiona both lead worship regularly and the children speak positively about their contributions. The children's behaviour in worship is very good and they listen attentively to all that is said. On one day each week the children meet for worship in their own classrooms. More guidance is required for the teachers in conducting the class worship in order to ensure that this weekly gathering is a meaningful experience. The children are positive about the worship. They enjoy singing and particularly enjoy those occasions when they can take part. However, there are not enough opportunities for them to be involved in planning and delivering worship and they do not have a clear understanding of the purpose of worship. There are no formal evaluation procedures for worship and the children's ideas are not used frequently enough. The children have visited the Anglican church and taken part in activities led by the clergy. They have found out about the church building and also used candles and other artefacts to experience the special atmosphere of a church building. The children in the Foundation Stage – Nursery and Reception – are being introduced to prayer as a time of quiet reflection. The children have enjoyed these experiences, which have contributed towards their spiritual development.

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

The headteacher and senior staff have a strong vision for the school which is evident in the high level of care which they demonstrate towards the pupils. However, this vision is not expressed in terms which are recognisably and distinctively Christian. The headteacher and Foundation Governors have recently begun a process of evaluating the school's distinctiveness as a church school. This is a promising start. The evaluation has highlighted a number of areas for development but it is too early for this to have made any impact. There are no formal procedures through which the Foundation Governors are able to monitor the effectiveness of the daily act of worship or the way in which religious education contributes towards the development of the school's Christian character. The last church school inspection report recommended that the school should, "establish clearer and more equal access to

the denominational clergy in the support of the Christian ethos and planning for worship." There has been an improvement in the way in which the school works together with the 2 clergy in planning worship and this has helped in the creation of a broad and balanced range of themes. There is, however, further work to be done in ensuring that both clergy play a full part in the development of the school's distinctive Christian character. Parents' views of the school are generally very positive. The school is effective in the way it seeks the views of parents and acts upon these views although the questionnaires do not ask for views about church school issues. Similarly, the children, who have many good ideas for their school, are not provided with formal opportunities to contribute their views about the school as a church school.

Sias report September 2006 Hob Hill, Church of England / Methodist Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Armitage Lane, Brereton, Rugeley, Staffordshire, WS15 1ED