

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Holly Hill Methodist /Church of England Voluntary Aided Infant and Nursery School**

New Street,  
Rubery,  
Rednal,  
Birmingham  
B45 0EU

#### **Diocese: Birmingham**

Local authority: Birmingham

Dates of inspection: 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2007

Date of last inspection: November, 2002

School's unique reference number:

Headteacher: Mrs. Christine Parker

Inspector's name and number: Mr. Neville Norcross – National Society Inspector Number 403

#### **School context**

Holly Hill is a joint Methodist and Church of England school which was built to serve the needs of the families in the Frankley area of SW Birmingham. The school is located in an area with high levels of social deprivation. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is above average. The school has a part-time Nursery attached to it and in June 2006 a Children's Centre was added. This will enable the school to provide extended services to the local community. The school hall is used as an ecumenical worship centre on Sundays. The two churches have a small chapel area and meeting rooms attached to the school.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Holly Hill as a church school is good**

Holly Hill is a good church school. It has a very strong and distinctive Christian ethos which makes a significant contribution to the personal and academic development of all pupils. It is a very effective church school where all members of staff have a shared sense of responsibility for the well-being of each individual pupil. The school stands proudly at the heart of the local community, which it serves in a spirit of Christian love.

#### **Established strengths**

- The Christian vision and commitment of the headteacher
- The high level of Christian care which is at the heart of all relationships within the school community
- The way in which the spiritual development of all members of the school community is enhanced by enabling them to reach their full potential

#### **Focus for development**

- In Religious Education, develop a portfolio of assessed work in order to ensure that the standard of children's work is maintained and enhanced.
- In Worship, develop the planning in order to provide additional guidance on the development of the termly themes

#### **The school is outstanding in the way its Christian character meets the needs of all learners**

The pupils in Holly Hill school believe that this is a special place. One child commented, "We feel safe at this school." Parents have full confidence in the school and spoke very positively about the impact which the school has on the pupils' well-being. The concerns of individual children are dealt with in an understanding and professional manner. All members of staff are

very clear about the school's commitment to meeting the individual needs of each child. The school's level of concern for all pupils, but especially those who are experiencing difficulties, is outstanding. The school is good at celebrating the children's achievements so that they feel proud of themselves. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The use of the school prayer board and the times of quiet reflection in worship and RE make a good contribution to their spiritual development. The recent emphasis on work with non-Christian faiths is helping the children to understand faiths and cultures which are different from their own. However, there are limited opportunities to meet with people who are from different cultural and religious backgrounds. The relationships between all members of the school community are good and are based upon Christian values. The way in which the school and the church, working together, reach out in Christian love to the local community is outstanding. Parents are very appreciative of the impact which the school has on the local community. The displays around school provide a stimulating environment in which the children can work. Many of the displays show the children's work in RE and other aspects of the school as a church school. However, the entrance foyer does not have the same impact and the school plans to address this as part of the re-modelling of this area. The school has introduced a number of successful initiatives to support the Every Child Matters programme. Time has been taken to look at the Christian values which are linked to this programme which is having a positive impact on pupils' personal development and well-being.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

The school describes daily worship as being "the heartbeat of the school." It is seen as an important feature of school life and a daily opportunity to celebrate issues of importance. The children have positive views of worship and particularly enjoy those occasions when they can take an active part. All members of staff attend worship which gives an important message to the children about staff commitment. Members of the clergy from both the Anglican and Methodist churches are involved in leading worship on a regular basis. In addition, however, worship is often led by visitors from the wider church community. This provides a variety of experience for the children. A number of initiatives to develop the prayer life of the school have been introduced. The prayer board on which children write their own prayers is used very effectively during worship led by the clergy. Some classrooms have quiet areas which can be used for informal prayer by the children. However, the use of these is not fully developed. All important gatherings for parents and visitors begin with a prayer. The co-ordinator has produced a programme of themes to cover a full year. The individual acts of worship are presented in interesting and imaginative ways. However the planning requires further detail in order to ensure that a broad and balanced range of themes is presented to the children.

### **The effectiveness of religious education is good**

The standards achieved by the children are good and in line with those expected nationally. The children are enthusiastic about religious education and spoke positively about the work they had undertaken. They show a good knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. A group of children showed a deep understanding of stories from the Bible. When talking about the story of Noah one pupil remarked that "God sent the rainbow as a promise to all people." Religious education makes an important contribution to the pupils' spiritual development. They are given time to reflect on important issues and the teachers are skilled in using challenging questions. The quality of teaching is good. The quality of the relationships with their teachers gives the children the confidence to respond positively during lessons. The scheme of work for religious education has recently been re-written in order to include additional work on non-Christian faiths. This is enabling the children to appreciate faiths and cultures which are different from their own. The co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure that the children receive a well balanced programme which is delivered in a creative and enjoyable manner. However, the evidence to support the school's assessment of religious education is limited.

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

The headteacher has a clear Christian vision for the school. The way in which she has challenged and encouraged the whole school community to realise this vision is outstanding. There has been a very comprehensive review, involving all members of the school community, of the school's distinctiveness as a church school. This has led to a church school action plan which clearly identifies future priorities. The two local churches and the wider church network are very supportive of the school. Their shared sense of purpose has enabled them to provide very effective Christian outreach to the local community. However, whilst parents greatly appreciate the outstanding support which is provided by and through the school they don't always recognise the Christian basis of the support and this is a lost opportunity. The effectiveness of the school governors is outstanding. They provide a good mixture of challenge and support for the school. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have good structures in place for finding out what is happening in the school and the "Forward Together" group enables them to explore new ideas. The school staff work together very well as a team. They are very clear about the school's priorities and have a shared sense of purpose. Everyone associated with the school is committed to the principle of providing the highest level of care in order to achieve the highest level of personal and academic achievement. The co-ordinator for Worship and RE has carried out a thorough review of these areas and is clear about the direction in which they need to develop. The level of co-operation between the churches is outstanding and has provided a solid foundation for its successful work within the school and the wider community.

Holly Hill Methodist /Church of England Voluntary Aided Infant and Nursery School New Street, Rubery, Rednal, Birmingham B45 0EU February, 2007