

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Hoole Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Hoole Lane  
Chester  
Cheshire  
CH2 3HB

#### **Diocese: Chester**

Local authority: Cheshire  
Dates of inspection: 16<sup>th</sup> October 2006  
Date of last inspection: n/a  
School's unique reference number: 119570  
Headteacher: Mrs Judith Sharman  
Inspector's name and number: Mr Graham Stephens 313

#### **School context**

Hoole CE Primary School is a large voluntary controlled Church of England school formed in 2003 by the amalgamation of St. James' CE Junior and Hoole All Saints CE Infant schools. In September 2005 it moved onto one site. There are three units for pupils with specific learning difficulties or disabilities. A high proportion of these have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The socio-economic background of most pupils is average.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Hoole CE Primary and Nursery as a Church of England school are good**

There is a clear Christian inspiration by which all members of the school community contribute effectively to the learners' personal development and well being. Care for others is based on 'If Christ was to walk into our school would He feel welcomed, valued and at-home?' Children feel happy and say they are well cared for and respected by adults. Stakeholders are proud of their school and express respect for the headteacher and her staff.

#### **Established strengths**

- Learners' personal development and well-being
- A very positive Christian ethos
- The outstanding links with other agencies to enhance school provision
- A friendly school with a real heart for the children, and the community, which reflect the nature of Christianity.

#### **Focus for development**

- Include more active participation of pupils in collective worship
- Integrate the themes for collective worship with the wider school curriculum
- Create effective planning, evaluation and record keeping of collective worship
- Adopt a formalised strategy for the self-evaluation of the distinctiveness of the school as a Church school.

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

The personal development and well-being of pupils is a clear priority. This was demonstrated when a child wrote 'Thank you for helping me through difficult situations. Thank you for helping me to stand up for what I think is right.' The way the school skilfully integrates vulnerable children from a particularly mobile population and from its three special units raises their self-esteem and provides them with a secure platform for personal development. There were strong examples of Christian love demonstrated by the staff where all learners are treated with respect and understanding. This is mirrored by the caring, supportive nature of the pupils themselves. This can be seen in the collaborative style of learning in which

children work with learning partners within a calm, purposeful environment that extends beyond the classrooms. Children spoke of tolerance and understanding when explaining that children of other faiths share their Christian worship. This caring learning environment has a considerable impact in enabling pupils to develop their potential. The Christian message is reflected in the bright, meaningful displays that the children clearly valued throughout a very impressive building. The foundation governors participate regularly in the work and life of the school and make a considerable contribution to its strong Christian ethos.

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

The school regards collective worship as an important part of the school day. Children and staff particularly enjoy the 'Open the Book' worship with its lively, active approach and the impact on worship is enhanced by strong support from the local Church community. All teachers lead worship and staff are active participants, providing a positive effect on the pupils. Children are taught how to pray and are given time to reflect on the Christian message of the worship. They show a respectful attitude and most participate in the singing and prayers. The school has recognised that singing needs to be joyful and strategies are being introduced to encourage this. A recently agreed action plan identifies the need to integrate the themes for worship with the wider curriculum. Although pupils carried out tasks during the worship observed the underlying message would have been reinforced if they had had a more creative role, relating it to a modern setting. The children were able to describe the major Christian festivals and the local Church is used to celebrate them. They were enthusiastic about celebrating Harvest there the following day. There is evidence showing that the school understands the difference between 'assembly' and 'worship' and has taken steps to make this distinction clear but this needs to be checked in documentation. Children are encouraged to comment on the content of worship and this could be incorporated into a formal strategy to evaluate the impact of collective worship. A clearer format for coordinating the planning for the impressive number of leaders of group worship is being developed.

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

Pupils show pride in their school and through their School Council have a recognised voice that is listened to and acted upon in its continual improvement. Pupils say they are happy and all the parents questioned confirmed that their children love coming to school. The strong Christian commitment of the staff, and in particular of the Head Teacher, inspires a very positive ethos. There is good leadership by the Head Teacher and the Deputy Headteacher resulting in a well-ordered school with a clear vision. This vision is communicated by the governors in the appointment and induction of staff and in the school prospectus. There are close links with local Churches, who give valuable practical support. There is a clear framework whereby stakeholders can contribute to school improvement. Pupils and staff benefit from the effective use made of other agencies to enhance the school's provision. The school receives strong support from the governors, who act as critical friends, and in particular from foundation governors. They are active within the school and therefore have good first-hand evidence of the strong Christian ethos reflecting in behaviour and attitudes.

Documentation should more clearly demonstrate the strong underlying Christian principles and attitudes of the school. A formalised evaluation strategy should be adopted for the celebration and further development of the denominational status of the school.