

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Langho and Billington, St. Leonard's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Whalley Road,
Langho,
Blackburn.
BB6 8AD

Diocese of Blackburn

Local authority: Lancashire

Date of inspection: 12th September 2007

Date of last inspection: March, 2003

School's unique reference number: 119417

Headteacher: Mrs. Anne Pickup

Inspector's name and number: Mr. Neville Norcross NS403

School Context

St. Leonard's is situated in a rural setting in the Ribble Valley between the villages of Langho, Billington and Brockhall. Pupils are drawn from a wide area and the majority do not live within walking distance of the school. The popularity of the school has meant that the school roll has risen to 247. In order to cater for these additional pupils the school has expanded and now provides spacious, modern facilities which include an imaginative and most attractive outdoor play area.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Leonard's as a Church of England school are good

The school has a distinctively Christian ethos which is supported by all members of the school community. There is strong emphasis on the Christian values of love and respect which enables all pupils to reach their full potential in both personal and academic development.

Established Strengths

- The shared Christian vision and commitment of the headteacher and priest in charge
- The strong Christian ethos which has a significant impact on the personal development and academic achievement of all children
- The variety of ways in which the children's spiritual development is enhanced.

Focus for Development

- Involve all teaching staff in the assessment of children's work in religious education so as to ensure consistency of standards across the school
- Develop the role of governors in monitoring and evaluating the school's effectiveness as a church school.

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

The children are enabled to feel very special within school. The Christian values, which are at the heart of the school, make a significant contribution to the children's very good behaviour and their high self esteem. They speak with pride about their school and understand that its status as a church school makes a difference to the school's character. The school's Christian character is made evident in the symbols and displays which can be found in the entrance, the corridors and the classrooms. One display illustrated the Christian charity links with a school in Africa. Each classroom has a display board which is set aside for religious education. These are often used as a prayer board and in some classrooms it is used very effectively to invite responses from the children. This makes a contribution to children's

spiritual development as do the times of reflection in worship and the use of the quiet areas and sensory garden in the outdoor area. The outdoor area provides an outstanding example of the way in which the environment can be used to further spiritual development. The relationships between all members of the school community are outstanding. The children are very polite and work together well. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall with spiritual development an outstanding feature. The older children show a high level of care for the younger ones and their response to the school's behaviour policy and rewards scheme is outstanding. Parents are very clear that the school is a church school and appreciate the benefits which this brings for their children. One parent spoke of the way in which her daughter had asked to be Baptised in order to be "part of God's family." The church bell is rung every morning as the children enter school as a reminder of the presence of the church and the fact that prayers are being said for the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

There is good evidence to support the school's view that "worship is central to the life of the school." The daily act of worship is very well planned. There is close co-operation between the senior leaders and the priest in charge which helps to make an important link between worship in church and school. The themes provide a broad and balanced coverage of the church year, Christian concepts and Biblical material. The current theme of "gifts" links in with the church's stewardship campaign. Once a fortnight the priest in charge arranges a GodZone which meets in church after the school day and is well used by parents and children. Parents speak positively about the impact which this informal act of worship has on their children and on themselves. The children have positive views of worship and clearly articulate its importance in school life. They enjoy singing and do so with enthusiasm. They particularly enjoy the worship led by the priest in charge and describe these occasions as being both enjoyable and interesting. The children behave very well during worship and respond enthusiastically to the various activities. Times of quiet reflection are used effectively to promote spiritual development. The recent installation of a data projector in the school hall is already beginning to make an impact through the use of visual images. The children are very much aware that the school is special because of its links with the local Anglican church. They are made aware of Anglican faith and practice through the choice of music, the use of church for some acts of worship and the strong influence of the priest in charge. There are no formal means in place for evaluating worship although the children are consulted on an informal basis. Parents and members of the church are invited to attend special celebrations such as at Harvest and Christmas and they speak very positively about these occasions. However, there are no regular invitations to the daily acts of worship which are held in school.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The standards achieved by the children are good overall although the picture is not consistent across the school. In some cases, where the children are provided with challenging and thought-provoking tasks, their work is outstanding, but this is not evident from every class. The teaching of Attainment Target 1, learning about religion, is very effective. Children have a good knowledge of the Christian faith and can articulate this with confidence. The teaching of Attainment Target 2, learning from religion, is less well developed in some classes. This leads to work which is less challenging in nature. The learning and teaching in religious education are good overall. Examples of outstanding teaching were seen during the inspection although this is not consistent across the school. In one outstanding lesson the children's interest was held by the imaginative use of music, challenging questions and the setting of creative tasks which were differentiated according to children's abilities. This lesson also provided a time of quiet reflection/prayer which made a significant contribution to the children's spiritual development. The co-ordinator has worked hard in her monitoring of the subject and in the way she has supported her colleagues. However, the current assessment procedures do not provide a clear indication of the standards which are being achieved. The children have positive views of religious education and speak with enthusiasm about the themes which they are covering. They understand the link between the teaching of religious education and the values which underpin the relationships and behaviour within school. Religious education is regarded as an important aspect of the school. It features within the school development plan and the co-ordinator is well supported in her role.

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

The headteacher and priest in charge have a clear Christian vision and a very strong and effective working relationship which enables their vision to be communicated to all members of the school community. An example of this commitment is the fact that all members of the teaching and non-teaching staff along with governors spent an evening together reviewing their priorities for the school as a church school. This was initiated by the headteacher who has worked tirelessly to develop the school's Christian character. The headteacher leads by example and her leadership has had a positive impact upon the school's Christian values and the children's spiritual development. This has been achieved at a time when a number of challenging issues have had to be addressed and is an indication of her commitment to the school as a church school. The co-ordinator for worship and religious education has worked hard to develop both subjects. She has a good understanding of both subjects and the impact which they are having within school. She is also clear about the steps which are needed to build upon current strengths. The school governors are supportive of the school and are keen to develop their role. Some of the governors are new to the post and do not yet have a fully developed understanding of the school's distinctiveness as a church school. The recent appointment of a Link Governor who will work with senior leaders is a positive move in this regard.

SIAS report September, 2007 St.Leonard's, Langho and Billington, BB6 8AD