

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Medlar-with-Wesham Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Garstang Road North,
Wesham,
Preston,
Lancashire
PR4 3DE

Diocese: Blackburn

Local authority: Lancashire

Dates of inspection: 29th September 2006

Date of last inspection: 24th May 2001

School's unique reference number: 119553

Headteacher: Mr. W. Hulme

Inspector's name and number: Mr. W.J. Holliday 48

School context

Medlar-with-Wesham C.E. school is a one form entry Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary school in the town of Wesham, between Blackpool and Preston. The school draws its pupils mainly from the parish and the surrounding community. The school building is cramped and includes temporary classrooms. There has been recent development of housing nearby and this is due to be further extended putting pressure upon available places in school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Medlar-with-Wesham as a Church of England school are good.

There is an extremely happy family atmosphere in the school in which all are valued and made to feel special. Christian values underpin the whole life of the school and have a very positive effect upon all pupils.

Established strengths

- The strong commitment of the Governors, Headteacher and Staff to the continuing development of the distinctive Christian ethos of the school.
- The very happy friendly atmosphere of the school in which all feel valued and are made to feel special.
- The very strong and mutually beneficial links with the parish church and also with the wider community.

Focus for development

- Develop an effective structure for self-evaluation of the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a Church of England school.
- Develop the monitoring role of governors so that it includes some observation of a range of Collective Worship and RE lessons by a link governor.
- Develop a portfolio of work and evidence from Religious Education which aids self-evaluation, reflects the units studied and is linked to the National standards in RE.

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

All pupils benefit from the very caring and supportive ethos within school and from the strong focus on building self-esteem. Everyone is made to feel special, whatever their talents or abilities, and pupils are very supportive and appreciative of each others achievements and contributions. Christian care and concern for others is clearly evident in all of school life. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The worship and prayer life of the school has a very positive impact on pupils. This is reflected in the thoughtful prayers contributed to class prayer books, the school prayer wall, and also in other curriculum work, including RE. The school has established a very beneficial link with a school in Preston enabling pupils to interact and work with those of other cultures. There is a good

range of extra-curricular activities available for the pupils and a good variety of trips, including residential experiences. The pupils take up a good range of responsibilities in school and confidently talk about how they help and support one another. This is evident in classes, in the school council, in the playground and with older pupils doing various tasks throughout the school day. The Christian values of the school, and the way they underpin all of school life, have a very positive impact upon pupils' moral development. Members of staff provide excellent role models for the pupils and the school provides good opportunities to engage with members of the church and the community. The development of a Parents Forum has further enabled the school to listen and respond to the ideas and concerns of parents. This has already had a positive impact on the out of school provision for pupils and administrative procedures.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.

Worship occupies an important place in the life of the school and is greatly valued by pupils and staff. A good range of themes are used throughout the year and there is a well balanced programme, including weekly worship in church to which parents are invited. Planning for worship does not include a system for formal evaluation, so as to inform future planning and identify strengths which can be built upon. The children take part enthusiastically in worship, in their singing, in saying prayers together and in contributing their ideas. The hall is small and cramped but despite this a good atmosphere is created which engages both pupils and staff. Good links are made with other work in school and to the school ethos of seeking to help others. During the inspection the children showed real interest and enjoyment in worship centred upon a project in Romania for which they had raised money, and which had been visited by members of staff. Acts of worship are recognisably Christian and honour the Anglican tradition, including using the Lord's Prayer and the Grace. The main Christian festivals are celebrated in church and the vicar regularly leads collective worship. Prayers are said before lunch and at the end of the day. An attractive prayer wall in the school hall enables the children to contribute prayers about their concerns, as well as to offer prayers of thanks. Focus areas for worship and RE are provided in classes, some of which provide a very good focus for the children, but in some classes they are less effective. Some opportunities are provided for reflection during collective worship but there is scope to develop this further. Worship makes a valuable contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the children through the range of opportunities provided throughout the year, and by skilful leading by the headteacher and staff. Good links are made to the school motto 'More than I can do'. The themes planned for this year helpfully include a link to a new programme in school on self awareness and managing feelings.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

Religious education is recognised by the governors, headteacher and staff as being of great importance in the school. Good use is made of the Diocesan syllabus, providing an appropriate balance between Christianity and other World faiths, further enhanced by the ongoing links with pupils from a school in Preston. Standards in RE are good and the pupils are making good progress. This was evident from discussions with pupils and from the work they had produced. Teaching of RE is good and lesson planning is clearly linked to the scheme of work. The subject is delivered in a variety of interesting ways to engage the pupils, including drama, role play, discussion, and making written responses. The pupils are able to make very thoughtful contributions to discussions and reflect upon the material presented. This was evident in Key stage 2 where pupils made very thoughtful written contributions about the call of Moses and, in Key stage 1, where children expressed very good ideas about how special people are in God's creation. Younger children are provided with very good opportunities for practical activities as part of RE lessons. RE contributes well to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils and good links are made with collective worship. The subject has been well managed by a subject coordinator who has recently left the school. She maintained regular monitoring of planning, and work produced, and regularly reported to the governors. This needs to be continued and extended to include observation of teaching. There has been no monitoring of RE teaching by a link governor. Work has begun on developing assessment in school and in collecting evidence from units of work but this is not yet embedded.

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

The headteacher, governors and staff have a very strong commitment to the continuing development of the distinctive Christian ethos of the school. The Christian purpose is clearly expressed in school documentation and is promoted well by the headteacher and governors. There is, however, no system in place for structured self-evaluation of the distinctive Christian ethos of the school. Regular questionnaires are used to seek the views of parents about the school but these do not include questions regarding the Christian ethos. There are strong and mutually beneficial links with the church community, with members of the governors and PTA also being members of the Parochial Church Council. There are also good links and partnerships with community groups. The school building is a difficult place in which to work for both staff and pupils and space is restricted. Good use is made of the church and the nearby community centre to supplement the space available to deliver the curriculum. The staff of the school feel involved and appreciated and show a very high level of commitment to the continuing development of the school and to providing the best for all pupils. Parents are extremely positive about the school and the very special family atmosphere it provides for their children.

SIAS report September 2006 Medlar-with-Wesham Church of England Primary School
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