

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Meltham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Holmfirth Road,
Meltham,
Holmfirth,
HD9 4DA

Diocese: Wakefield

Local authority: Kirklees

Date of inspection: 7th October 2008

Date of last inspection: November 2005

School's unique reference number: 107718

Headteacher: Mr A. Beaumont

Inspector's name and number: Mr J.W. Bradley NS129

School context

Meltham Primary School, with 396 pupils on roll, is one of three primary schools serving this town to the west of Holmfirth. The great majority of the pupils are of white British heritage and none speak English as an additional language. The headteacher has been in post since January 2008 and the parish is currently in interregnum.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Meltham Primary as a Church of England school are good

It is the outstanding organisation, evaluation and impact of collective worship which is the basis of Meltham's church school identity. This is the reason why pupils know they belong to a Christian community and that they are cared for and nurtured. The school's inclusive Christian aims indicate the importance attached to church school status and the caring atmosphere throughout the school is appreciated by staff, governors, parents and pupils.

Established strengths

- The outstanding organisation and impact of collective worship.
- The atmosphere in the school, based upon sound Christian values.
- The desire and will from the new headteacher and governors further to develop church school distinctiveness.

Focus for development

- Staff and governors formally and regularly to evaluate their church school distinctiveness.
- Further links to be made with other faiths and cultures.
- To increase the levels of pupil participation in collective worship.

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

The previous Section 48 report recommended 'development of understanding and contact with faiths and cultures of other groups within the broader community'. This has, to some extent, been achieved by links with schools in Pakistan and France and a wider range of visitors from other faiths to speak to pupils. Plans are now in place to further these initiatives by establishing links with local schools and in Uganda via 'Churches together in Meltham'. These developments have increased distinctiveness as a church school and have re-affirmed to pupils that theirs is community where the needs and ways of others are to be appreciated. Charitable giving has a high profile demonstrating to pupils how they can help people beyond their own community. Pupils speak highly of their school and the way they are treated and say it is 'God-friendly'. Visits to their church for worship and educational purposes are much appreciated and enjoyed by them. Religious education teaching links well with the school's overall caring ethos and young pupils were observed to understand the reasons for prayer and to enthusiastically write their own. Governors are grateful to the

dedicated staff and parents appreciate the Christian aspects of the education, care and nurture offered to their children. The new headteacher, having seen the school through a period of relative difficulty, is beginning to develop a wide range of ideas further to increase Meltham's church school status and the school is very well placed to make progress. A good basis is already in place and many opportunities have been identified to place the school at the heart of its community and to use the school's beautiful grounds to provide increased opportunities for pupils' spiritual development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship in this school occupies a central place in its life as a Christian community. It is well planned, monitored and evaluated and is currently based upon 'Values for Life'. All staff regularly lead and attend worship, thus confirming to pupils its whole community aspects. Good links are made with the 'social and emotional aspects of learning' and plans are in place to develop these even further by clearly defining their Christian aspects. The worship current theme is displayed for staff and a list of follow-up ideas is produced for them so that the impact of worship is taken well beyond the assembly hall into the day to day life of the school. Regular meetings with lunchtime supervisory staff, led by the highly effective and dedicated co-ordinator, focus upon the value for each half-term and this initiative is regularly evaluated by the staff for its impact upon pupil behaviour and relationships. Worship is evaluated weekly for its impact upon pupils by senior staff and other staff are asked for comments. Pupils are also involved in this evaluation process and comment that 'worship helps me think about things', 'when we pray it's a way of communicating with God' and 'it's good to have children taking part'. Parents add their views through 'comment books' Increased participation by pupils is now seen as an area for development as is the use of liturgical colours during worship. Anglican aspects of worship are well served for pupils. This is done by a close following of the church's year and use of the school's parish church for worship and educational purposes where the use of the building is explained. Prayer and reflection, which form a regular part of worship, are well understood by pupils and add to the impact it has on whole school ethos.

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

Pupils know and appreciate their church school and this is clearly a result of the way Meltham is led and managed. Church school aspects of leadership were an integral part of the recent headship interviews, with foundation governors being actively involved in the process. The outstanding attitude towards and management of school worship makes clear to all that this is a church school. Recent discussion of revised aims and objectives led to some meaningful discussion by staff and governors regarding what it actually means to be a Voluntary Controlled School. However formal and regular monitoring and evaluation of church school aspects are not currently carried out by staff and governors. It is intended that this will involve an extension in the ways foundation governors currently carry out their role a 'critical friends'. Links with the school's parish church remain good during the interregnum due to the interest shown by an assistant priest and parishioners. A Christian integrity shown to all pupils is very much part of this school and this is exemplified by the good relationships evident between all stakeholders. Local community links are strong and extend to performances for 'Churches Together'. When this is linked to the school's wider charitable work a feeling is invoked in pupils that they are part of a loving community, extending beyond their own boundaries and that Christian love for others should be a way of life. Christian values are bound up, via the impact of worship, in the life of this school.

SIAS report October 2008 Meltham C.E. (VC) Primary School, HD9 4DA