

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Newchurch-in-Pendle, St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided School

Spennbrook Road
Newchurch-in-Pendle
Burnley
BB12 9JP

Diocese: Blackburn

Local authority: Lancashire

Dates of inspection: 20th September 2007

Date of last inspection: October 2003

School's unique reference number: 119435

Headteacher: Mrs S Hasler Clegg

Inspector's name and number: Rev W Sloan 521

School context

St Mary's is a successful small Church of England village school that serves the villages and hamlets of Newchurch, Spennbrook and Barley and the towns of Nelson and Burnley. Most children are white British and the proportion with special educational needs is below average. There are good links with the local church and clergy. The long serving Headteacher retired in July 2007 and the Governors are in the process of finding a replacement Headteacher. The Associate Headteacher who has made a significant impact on developing and maintaining the Christian ethos of the school has been in post from the beginning of September 2007.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Newchurch-in-Pendle, St Mary's Church of England School are good.

Newchurch-in-Pendle St. Mary's Church of England Primary School is a good school that has a clear Christian ethos. Pupils are confident and happy in a caring, calm and vibrant environment. Christian principles and attitudes are embedded into the school's mission. Collective worship occupies an important place in the life of the school and contributes well to pupils' effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Established strengths

- The outstanding personal development of all pupils that enables them to be happy and confident in school.
- Christian values that permeate the life of the school.
- Collective worship that has good impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- The strong leadership provided by the headteacher and governors.

Focus for development

- To establish strategies for the evaluation of Collective Worship by pupils, staff and governors.
- Develop teacher marking of Religious Education tasks in order to give pupils a clearer focus of how to improve.

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

The school's strong Christian ethos permeates the life of the school. Staff and Governors work hard to meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils spoken to say they feel safe and valued. Their personal development is outstanding with the older pupils being excellent role models for the younger pupils. All pupils treat each other and adults respectfully. This is evident in

classrooms where pupils are fully engaged in lessons enabling them to make excellent progress. Pupils feel individually valued and special, and their work, artefacts, photographs and collective contributions to school life can be seen around school. They understand and appreciate that school life is underpinned by Christian beliefs and practice. "We are all Christians at this school" said one pupil. Another pupil said, "We are good at helping like Jesus." Pupils joining the school quickly settle into school life. The school provides good opportunities to enable pupils to develop personal qualities needed for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural growth. Relationships are important in this small school. Pupils know how to get support if needed and also how to provide it to others. The developing School's Council now meets weekly. This is having a significant impact in helping pupils to think about others. They make decisions for the whole school community and are encouraged to listen to the pupils they represent. Classrooms are used effectively and contain imaginative, good quality displays. The inside of the school is fully utilised and the outside space has been sympathetically developed for educational purposes. Pupils show concern for the wider world. Above all this is an ordered, lively community where achievement is high and their joy of being at school is evident.

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

Collective Worship plays an important part in the life of the school and contributes to its Christian witness. There is a very good collective worship policy, agreed by staff and Governors, which places "worship at the centre of the school's daily life". Pupils are clear about its importance to them as individuals. Worship includes varied pupil participation, the celebration of achievements and hobbies, and much reference to the school's core values. Pupils showed they could draw out Christian meaning from the stories they heard. Staff share in leading worship, and the regular input from the Vicar is regarded by pupils as a highlight. Various Christian festivals and other events such as Harvest, Education Sunday, Christmas, Leavers' Service, Carol Service, etc. are celebrated in the local church (which is very close to the school) and parents attend. This together with the church being used as an RE resource is helping children to appreciate the links between church, school and community. This is helping to reinforce the Christian purpose of the school. Pupils speak of the value of prayer in their lives and they see it as significant that prayers are said at other times of the school day. Pupils lead Collective Worship both in school and in Church. These opportunities are valued by the pupils and they are having a positive impact on their spiritual development. Although planning of Collective Worship is good the school needs to develop evaluation by pupils, staff and governors.

The effectiveness of religious education is good.

Religious Education makes a significant contribution to the achievement of the school's objectives. It is well planned and resourced, imaginatively taught and effectively evaluated. It is also thoughtfully integrated with Literacy and other subjects. Throughout the school there is a good range of pupils' RE work on display. Pupils' RE work is also displayed in the Parish Church. The pupils' written work demonstrates that they are being taught across the full range of the RE syllabus. Pupils value RE and can talk about what they have learnt – and sometimes what they believe – to each other and at home. There is an introduction to concepts from the world faiths. The school has formed a link with a school in Nelson where the majority of pupils are from the Muslim faith. This is giving the pupils a clear understanding of another faith and through their interaction with the pupils, another culture. The pupils are able to reflect on issues important to them and can talk about how values such as 'showing respect' are important when learning about other faith traditions. The subject is effectively monitored and appropriate priorities for the development of the subject across the school have been identified. The marking of pupils work is positive. However, it needs to help learners reflect on their work in order that they will know how it can be improved.

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

The Associate Headteacher, staff and governors make a significant contribution to the success of the school as a church school. They provide effective leadership and work in very close partnership to promote their Christian purpose and vision. This vision is fully supported by a united staff team and the governing body. The school's Christian purpose is clearly expressed in the ethos statement which is in the prospectus and in a range of school policies. A weekly newsletter puts the school's values firmly in front of parents. Governors are increasingly aware of the distinctiveness of a church school and their own responsibilities for supporting and monitoring this. Parents are encouraged to see themselves as full partners in their children's education, are regularly consulted, and are strong in their admiration and support for the school. They believe the school emphasises its church school status and Christian distinctiveness in a balanced way. The school is outward looking, relates well to its own local community, and supports those in need both in this country and abroad in a way consistent with its values. The management of both Collective Worship and RE is good. It is accompanied with effective teaching and learning strategies and appropriate allocations of time and resources.

SIAS report September 2007 St Mary's C E VA Primary School, Newchurch in Pendle BB12 9JP