

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Oxenhope Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Cross Lane
Oxenhope
Keighley
BD22 9LH

Diocese: Bradford

Local authority: Education Bradford
Dates of inspection: 14 January 2008
Date of last inspection: November 2003
School's unique reference number: 107349
Headteacher: Mr Michael Wragg
Inspector's name and number: Mrs Glenys Vere 463

School Context

Oxenhope Primary School serves a rural community on the outskirts of Keighley. There are 148 pupils on roll. Pupils are predominantly of white British heritage and are drawn mainly from the village. Although the headteacher has been in post for some years, there have been significant changes in the senior leadership team since the last inspection.

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

Oxenhope primary school enables its pupils to grow and prosper within a Christian family atmosphere. Pupils enjoy school life and there is a strong emphasis on meeting individual needs. The school's distinctive ethos is well supported by its close links with the church. New staff, along with governors, are making a significant contribution to school development and the school is well placed to continue to improve.

Established strengths

- Distinctively Christian worship which is central to the life of the school
- The inclusive Christian ethos which values the contribution of every individual
- Productive and well established links between the school, church and community
- Supportive governing body which has a clear vision for school improvement

Focus for development

- Increase opportunities for pupils' participation in collective worship and embed systems for the monitoring and evaluation of this area
- Implement the proposed plans to develop appropriate systems for assessment, monitoring and evaluation in religious education in order to embed good practice in teaching and learning across the school and improve strategies to monitor pupil progress.
- Devise appropriate mechanisms to ensure that foundation governors and other stakeholders can effectively monitor the school's progress as a church school
- Explore ways of further improving the school's communication of information to parents

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

A distinctive and inclusive Christian ethos underpins everything in the school, especially its provision for pupils' spiritual and moral growth from foundation stage through to year six. The school's Christian values have a strong impact on pupils' personal development and provide a context within which pupils can make progress in their learning. Pupils' behaviour is good, demonstrating their respect and support for one another. The school enables pupils to build up their confidence and self esteem and helps them to feel valued and secure. Pupils are comfortable in talking about their beliefs and feelings and pupils with disabilities are included and nurtured. Pupils say that the school listens and responds when they express

their opinions through such groups as the School Council and pupil surveys. Displays on 'God is...' and the 'Prayer Tree' give pupils opportunities to write thoughtful prayers and express ideas whilst following up themes in religious education and worship. A wide range of 'before and after' school clubs cater for pupils' interests, including sporting activities, drama and 'Breakfast with God'. The latter is organised by parents, providing fun and devotional activities which support the school in nourishing pupils' spiritual and social development. The school's distinctive character is promoted through Christian signs and symbols in key areas of the school and along with pupils' talk, provide evidence that the school's Christian values support individual pupils' spiritual and moral development

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship forms a central part of school life and is a key element in its Christian witness within the Anglican tradition. Through worship, Christian principles are articulated using music, drama, conversation and story and there are links with pupils' own life experiences.

Appropriate resources are used within the context of a wide range of worship themes, which include Christian festivals such as Epiphany and difficult issues such as homelessness. The school's approach is inclusive, taking account of the needs and backgrounds of the school community. The local vicar, or the Methodist minister, lead worship weekly and the vicar is also involved with the headteacher and staff in planning. There are productive links with the local church and pupils' work is often displayed there and celebrated by the local community. Pupils respond thoughtfully to worship and speak with understanding about the major Christian festivals which take place regularly at school and church, supported by parents, governors and the wider community. Many opportunities for spiritual development are provided through reflection and prayer, including pupils' own prayers. Worship is sensitive to those of different faiths and those with no faith. The recently appointed coordinator has reviewed and updated planning and record keeping and, along with the headteacher and foundation governors, is currently leading the process of setting up a more formal structure for monitoring and evaluating worship and widening pupil participation. Themes in collective worship impact effectively across the curriculum. Members of staff take an active part in worship alongside pupils, while clergy from the wider church community and visitors of other faiths are involved from time to time.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

In lessons observed at foundation stage and in an upper key stage two class, standards were at least good with clearly differentiated levels of work being demonstrated. At upper key stage two, pupils exhibit an enthusiasm for learning and an understanding of Christianity and other world religions. ICT is used very effectively to assist pupils' research into Christian signs and symbols. Through careful choice of integrated themes, religious education learning experiences at the foundation stage assist pupils in achieving the early learning goals. Generally, pupils employ appropriate vocabulary, work collaboratively and have extremely positive attitudes. An understanding of other faiths is nurtured by visitors such as the 'Blessed Life', a group of Muslim women who explain their faith and through involvement with contrasting schools in the area and visits to worship buildings e.g. the Keighley Mosque. Recently updated schemes of work, based on the Diocesan Syllabus, are of good quality, reflecting Anglican traditions and the latest developments in religious education. However, systems for the monitoring, assessment and evaluation of religious education are not developed. The school intends to compile portfolios of work to aid the assessment process and enable staff to identify pupils' individual progress; find out what standards are like throughout the school to inform future planning and improve continuity and progression. The coordinator, headteacher and foundation governors are considering ways of constructing a formal mechanism for monitoring and evaluating religious education to ensure consistency and strengthen the role of this area within the distinctive context of an aided school.

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

The senior leadership team and governors are working together to promote the school's distinctiveness as a Church school. The governors, who have recently reviewed their own effectiveness in the management of the school, support and challenge the headteacher and

staff in the school improvement process. School self evaluation accurately recognises areas that are now good, whilst also identifying where the school needs to improve. Foundation governors are aware of their responsibilities within a voluntary aided school. Along with the coordinator for collective worship and religious education, they are exploring ways of formalising systems for monitoring and evaluation of these curriculum areas and reporting regularly to the full governing body, to sustain and develop church school progress. There is a close relationship between the school and the church, through the pastoral role of the vicar, the regular visits of foundation governors and the many joint services and activities. Links with the community are strengthened by the school's regular contributions to the Oxenhope Outlook and involvement in numerous other village projects including events at the local Sue Ryder home, thus providing more opportunities for pupils to widen social responsibility skills. There is clear evidence of parental participation in all aspects of school life and many parents speak positively about the school's special quality which allows pupils to flourish. The school is currently exploring ways of improving its communication with parents to ensure that they are well informed.

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