

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Porter Croft Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Pomona Street,
Sheffield,
S11 8JW,

Diocese : Sheffield

Local Authority: City of Sheffield

Date of Inspection: 9 May 2007

Date of last inspection: January 2001

School's unique reference number: 107121

Headteacher: Mrs L. West

S.I.A.S. Inspector: NS129 Mr. J.W. Bradley

School Context

Porter Croft School has 166 pupils on roll and is situated close to the city centre. Over 50% of the pupils are of other faiths; the majority are Muslim while 46% speak English as an additional language. Pupils attend from the immediate area, but also from other parts of the city. The school has been through a recent period of difficulty regarding its management; the Acting Headteacher has been in post since September 2006, as has the Deputy Headteacher.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Porter Croft School as a Church of England School are satisfactory.

The school's new mission statement is very clear about its renewed sense of purpose that all it does should be underpinned by Christian values. This renewal is clearly demonstrated by the work being done by head, staff and governors and clergy to move the school forward as a Church School. A great deal remains to be done but there is real will and commitment now being shown.

Established strengths

- The good relationships evident within the school.
- The commitment to a Christian ethos from head, governors and local parishes.
- The Christian commitment to inclusivity and the care shown for every child as a unique individual.

Focus for development

- Governors to consider what should be distinctive about their Church School.
- To develop a system for monitoring, assessment and evaluation of the teaching of Religious Education.
- To seek out and appoint a full compliment of Foundation Governors.

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

Pupils speak highly of their school and statements such as 'our teachers are very helpful' and 'everyone here is very kind' are typical responses. The School Council sees its role as 'changing the school to fit peoples' needs'. The high profile afforded

to charitable giving has the effect of pupils looking beyond their own school to consider the needs of others. Pupils know they attend a Church School and displays in classrooms and other parts of the building make this very clear. There are also highly appropriate and meaningful displays regarding other faiths. Parents speak highly of the school and of their appreciation of the care shown for their children and its approach to its multi-faith community. Pupils are well behaved, polite and welcoming to visitors. Links with its church and a neighbouring parish are now increasingly being developed and there is a real will, after a long period of uncertainty, to move forward to affect the Christian character of the school.

The impact of Collective Worship on the school community is good.

Worship is now well organised on a pre-planned thematic basis and the atmosphere is that of a community being together. A large majority of parents from the Muslim Faith approve of the school's Christian worship, but a small proportion does withdraw their children. All staff attend, thus confirming the whole school, community aspects of worship and pupils state very clearly that they enjoy the various experiences offered to them. They know the 'theme of the week' and follow-up sessions in the classroom give opportunities for discussion and reflection on the issues presented. Thus worship clearly influences and underpins the ethos of the school. Anglican aspects are served by the following of the church's year and by input from the clergy of different churches. No use is yet made of candles or other Christian symbolism to differentiate between worship and assembly and a system of evaluation of the impact of worship has yet to be fully developed. The pupils say the 'School Creed' but further work is required on the development of more corporate prayer and opportunities for reflection. Work is underway to address these various issues.

The effectiveness of Religious Education is satisfactory

A new co-ordinator is beginning to develop the teaching and profile of the teaching of Religious Education. There are now R.E displays in every classroom, thus confirming the importance being afforded to the subject. The curriculum is now planned using the locally agreed syllabus and some aspects of the QCA documentation. A start has been made regarding monitoring and evaluation of impact. RE forms a central part of the school's improvement plan and the need is appreciated for its profile in an Aided School to be increased. Children's knowledge of the Christian faith is satisfactory and other faiths are satisfactorily covered. The teaching observed was good in all cases, with pupils being offered opportunities to reflect upon the subject matter. An example here is 'how can we make our world a better place for all?' stemming from a Buddhist story. Teacher planning is now building in opportunities for reflection and in some cases, meditation. R.E. is therefore increasingly being used to influence pupils' thinking regarding the needs of both themselves and others. There is, as yet, no Link Governor for the subject, but this is to be addressed.

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

The leadership and management of this school, including clergy and governors, are clear about how a strong Christian ethos can advance the education of their pupils. There is now a genuine will and desire for Christian principles to be at the centre of all the school does. The newly appointed senior staff and Chair of Governors, willingly and ably supported by clergy, are clear about the direction in which they wish to move the school. This will be greatly assisted when further Foundation Governors are appointed. The governors are well led by a committed and relatively newly

appointed chair who believes the school must show a much greater openness regarding its church school status and functions. It is this increased openness, shared by staff and supported by local parishes, which is beginning to affect thinking regarding future developments. Staff and governors have not, as yet evaluated what it means to be a church school. Parents have not yet been asked for their opinions. There is a great deal of work to be done, but it has begun and the desire for it to continue is very evident.

SIAS Report May 2007 Porter Croft CE (VA) Primary School S11 8JW