

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Prestbury Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Bollin Grove,
Prestbury,
Macclesfield
SK10 4JJ

Diocese: Chester

Local authority: Cheshire

Dates of inspection: 12th July 2007

Date of previous inspection: 15th January 2003

School's unique reference number: 111325

Headteacher: Mr David Capener

Inspector's name and number: Christine J Buckley

School context

Prestbury Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School has children from nursery to year 6 with 323 children on roll. It is situated in the village of Prestbury on the outskirts of Macclesfield. Most pupils are of white British heritage, with few pupils coming from ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is much lower than in most schools. Similarly, the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below the national average. When children start school their skill levels overall are above the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Prestbury as a Church of England school are outstanding

A Christian ethos and collective worship are at the heart of school life where high quality relationships exist which promote pupils' personal development and well-being. Positive, proactive Christian leadership by the headteacher, staff and governors is significant in creating this outstanding church school.

Established strengths

- The Headteacher's vision and leadership for this church school.
- The pervading Christian ethos with excellent relationships between children, staff and parents.
- Collective worship seen by all as a clear priority each day in school.

Focus for development

- The involvement of pupils in the planning of collective worship.

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

The pupils and staff feel highly valued and are all made to feel special. Achievements made both inside and outside the school are recognised and celebrated. The school has a special award each half term for two children who have 'made a difference'. The pupils are extremely supportive of one another in class and in the playground and appreciate the very caring atmosphere of the school. The 'fun police' provide good opportunities for children of different ages to mix together as does the school council that has elected children from each age group. The ABC, anti-bullying council, and the school council surgery are ways in which older pupils support and encourage pupils who may experience any difficulties. Similarly, pupils say they feel safe in school and would tell an adult if they had any problems. As pupils move through the school they are able to take on more responsibility for their learning and behaviour. Pupils speak of their desire to be at school and have obvious enthusiasm for learning in its widest sense.

There is a clear policy for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Collective worship and RE contribute significantly to this development but it is also evident across the

curriculum. Parents' letters show their appreciation of children being challenged to ask searching questions about faith. The pupils in upper key stage 2 had formulated many searching questions about their own faith and had the opportunity to ask these in an open forum which has led some to be able to articulate their own faith clearly. This showed very good, clear progress of spiritual development.

Christian values are evident in their link with Maxonia School in South Africa and the help that they give to those less fortunate. Examples of these include the making and selling of cakes for Children In Need and children singing in a choir for Christian Relief Uganda. The inclusiveness and Christian values were also evident in the behaviour of the children and the success of a child who had been previously excluded from another school. Pupils had a clear understanding of social injustice in the world and the need for inclusiveness and equal opportunity in their own situations.

The school environment reflects the Christian nature of the school and stimulates children to reflect on important issues. In Key Stage One this is seen in a display about the Prodigal Son where the observer is invited to reflect upon their own feelings. The entrance to the school is marked with a cross and their link to Maxonia School. Each classroom has a prayer focus so that children can read, write or say a prayer. Prayers that the children have written are used in class at the end of the day.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Acts of worship are well planned and play a central role in the life of the school. The themes of collective worship are shared with parents/carers through the headteacher's weekly letter. The themes for the next academic year have been chosen by the headteacher in conjunction with the vicar. Each week the vicar comes into school to lead a community act of worship where parents attend and pupils from school visit the church for major festivals throughout the year. In this way they become accustomed to Anglican practices and can follow a service sheet. The school provides some opportunities for participation by the pupils but the school has identified that these could be developed. During a Key Stage One act of collective worship, pupils acted out the story of the Good Samaritan in an updated format and children led some prayers. The story of the Good Samaritan involving two members of opposing football teams enabled the children to apply spiritual truths to their own lives and the pupils responded by explaining who they regarded as their neighbour. Indeed throughout the day there are opportunities for prayer and more formal prayers are said in classes before lunch and at the end of the day. Most children clearly enjoy singing praise during collective worship and also reception sang in class, as a way of giving thanks to God. Each half term the nursery has a praise and play session lead by a member of St Peter's Church. This is a development of pre-nursery worship in church and aids continuity and progression from home to school. Recently a focal point, of a table with candles and a cross, has enhanced the atmosphere of collective worship in the hall, together with a more conducive seating arrangement.

Children reflect on messages given during collective worship illustrated by a year 4 pupil when she decided to carry on with the violin, despite doing badly, because of a lesson from St Paul about looking forward and having hope.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Religious Education is recognised by governors and staff as being very important within the school curriculum. There is a clear R.E. policy and the Cheshire syllabus is used which will be reviewed and adjusted at the end of the year. Both learning about religion, and learning from religion are covered well with pupils being aware of their learning targets. Their progress is recorded by underlining the appropriate level descriptors. The work recorded indicates that it is of a high standard with older children able to ask themselves and others searching and 'big' questions. Religious Education has an appropriate priority in the curriculum with every class having a set time to study this subject. Teaching is of a high standard using methods of collaborative working, the use of ICT and artefacts; all of these help the children to gain an understanding and knowledge of their topics. Pupils are invited to apply lessons learned from Religious Education to their own lives. This contributes to their spiritual and moral development. Examples of this include pupils from the reception class who made a list of ways that they show their love to God and in a year 3 class pupils were thinking about objects that can help them in their own prayer time. Pupils are able to talk

about the Christian faith and use the Bible regularly, each class having a set of Bibles to use. Pupils also show an understanding of other religions, for example the use of artefacts in Judaism and Islam. The school is aware of the need to ensure progress and continuity from the nursery to year 6 and to evaluate this through work scrutiny.

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

The headteacher provides a clear Christian vision and innovative leadership for the school as a church school. The staff and governors support and encourage this vision which is articulated in weekly letters to parents and carers in the church/community magazine and leadership/governors meetings. The headteacher's leadership style is warmly welcomed by children, parents and the community as it emanates from his own faith, aspiration for high standards and an enthusiasm for the continued development of the school. There are strong links with the local Anglican church, St Peter's, and the vicar and headteacher have an excellent working relationship. The school also has good community links participating in events like the Rose Queen, as well as Cheshire events such as the Youth Games. Questionnaires from parents and children show that they are involved in evaluating the school's progress and value the school highly.

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