

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### Scorton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Snow Hill Lane  
Scorton  
Preston  
PR3 1AY

#### Diocese: Blackburn

Local authority: Lancashire  
Dates of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> March 2008  
Date of last inspection: February 2005  
School's unique reference number: 119613  
Headteacher: Mrs. Elizabeth Smith  
Inspector's name and number: Penny Hollander NS526

#### School context

Scorton Church of England Primary School is a very small village school of thirty pupils and is situated in the north of Lancashire, close to the city of Lancaster. Pupils are of white British ethnicity and come from very mixed social and economic backgrounds. A number of properties within the village are let on a short term basis with the result that a higher than expected number of pupils begin and leave school, other than at the normal times. There is no paid incumbent at the church but a non-stipendiary member of the clergy offers weekly, dedicated help to the school, for pastoral support and collective worship.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Scorton Church of England school are good

The school promotes a distinctively Christian vision and the pastoral care for all within this ethos is a particular strength. The Christian values of love, care, compassion and trust are effectively demonstrated in the daily life of the school by all members of its community. These are reinforced by the strong links with the local churches.

#### Established strengths

- The personal development of all pupils in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect
- Strong links with the church and local community
- The teamwork amongst all adults in the school in promoting a Christian ethos and values.

#### Focus for development

- Enable children to take some responsibility for planning and leading acts of collective worship
- Introduce a system of assessment in religious education to ensure continuity and progression
- Ensure that governors monitor the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a church school

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

The school's very friendly and welcoming environment ensures that all children feel valued and special, whatever their gifts and talents. The Christian character of the school permeates all of its life. The personal development and well being of all pupils within this environment is a particular strength. The children are proud of their achievements and these are regularly celebrated in school. They feel very happy, safe and have high self-esteem. Pupils recognise they have an important role to play within school and are active in taking on the responsibilities they are given. They take very good care of one another and ensure that older pupils look after younger ones. The school council takes its responsibilities seriously and recently made improvements in playground equipment. There is mutual trust and respect

between pupils, teachers and other adults who work in school. Children clearly know the difference between right and wrong and respond well to the Christian values of love, compassion and forgiveness that they see adults demonstrating on a daily basis. Any difficulties are dealt with swiftly and in a spirit which demonstrates these values. Children enjoy all aspects of school life and appreciate the wide range of learning experiences they are given both within and outside of the school environment. Pupils are keenly aware of the needs of others less fortunate than themselves. They speak enthusiastically of their link with a school in Africa and the support they give through fundraising and letter writing. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, within the school's distinctive Christian character, is outstanding. Pupils are proud of their links with the local church and community. They speak very warmly of the pastoral care they and their families receive from the vicar. In their turn, the school supports the church by regular involvement in services at significant times in the church year such as at Christmas, Education Sunday, Mothering Sunday and Harvest. These occasions are well supported by both parents and members of the village community. Parents speak very warmly of the school, particularly its inclusive, family atmosphere and the care shown towards their children within a Christian context. They also show their support through effective fundraising for the school. Links with the Methodist and Catholic churches in the village ensure that the children are aware of the wider nature of the Christian church. This is apparent in the displays around school, the comments they make and the prayers they write. The school environment is used effectively to promote the Christian nature of the school with appropriate symbols and creative displays.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Collective worship is central to school life. This is evident from the plans and evaluations, to which both staff and pupils contribute. Worship is led by different members of staff and by visitors, including the Methodist minister. This enables the children to experience a variety of worship styles. Times for reflection and personal worship are a feature of these occasions. The children respond enthusiastically and sensitively. Children's spiritual development is enhanced by those occasions when they can lead prayers and use their own prayer requests. Pupils clearly enjoy doing this. However, opportunities for pupil involvement are limited overall. The vicar's weekly contribution to worship ensures that the children are familiar with the Anglican foundation of the school. Significant occasions in the church year are celebrated through school services in the church at Christmas, Mothering Sunday and Harvest. The children's active role on these occasions is appreciated by the parents, friends and members of the local community who regularly attend such events. The introduction of a travelling nativity box, distributed to individual school families on a rotational basis during Advent is an example of how seriously the school takes its Christian foundation. It is strongly appreciated by the families who use it.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Children are positive about their religious education lessons and achieve well. Their knowledge of the Christian faith and the church year is good. In one lesson this was made evident by their understanding of the significance of the Easter story. In another lesson their responses indicated a clear awareness of the concept of trust as an important value in religion. The school uses a range of teaching strategies which enable pupils to learn from as well as learning about religion. Plans indicate that they learn not only about Christianity but other religions as well. The children are particularly enthusiastic about visits they make to learn about these. Recent examples they mention include a visit to a Buddhist Temple and a Jewish museum. They show sensitivity in being able to reflect on different religious and cultural traditions. The school does not have a system of assessment for religious education. This limits the school's ability to ensure continuity and progression in learning. Staff make good use of the training opportunities which are available. This develops their own knowledge and understanding and they use this effectively in their teaching of religious education..

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

The headteacher, staff and governors have a clear Christian vision for the development of the school's distinctive character. They are keen to see this realised and it is well reflected in the school's development plan. Since the autumn term 2007 the governors have been actively working on this with the headteacher. The governor training they have received is now starting to be put into practice to monitor the Christian vision for the school and its distinctiveness and effectiveness as a church school. The school's leaders for collective worship and religious education are effective in raising standards in these areas. All staff are fully committed to the Christian vision and values of the school and provide good role models for the children. Teamwork is a key feature in this. They feel that they have an important role to play in the decision making of the school and that their ideas and viewpoints are welcomed. The views of parents and pupils about the distinctive Christian character of the school are actively sought through questionnaires and informal discussion. This ensures that this aspect remains a key priority for the whole school community. It is well supported by the effective pastoral links with the church.

SIAS report March 2008. Scorton CE School PR3 1AY