

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Kirkham, St Michael's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

School Lane,  
Kirkham,  
Preston  
PR4 2SL

#### **Diocese: Blackburn**

Local authority: Lancashire  
Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> February 2008  
Date of last inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> June 2004  
School's unique reference number: 119550  
Headteacher: Mrs Lesley Brookbanks  
Inspector's name and number: Rev W Sloan (521)

#### **School context**

Kirkham, St Michael's is an average sized primary school. The majority of pupils live in the market town of Kirkham with a small number travelling from further afield. At the time of inspection the school had a larger than average number of temporary staff. The school is situated close to the Church. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average as is those who are eligible for free school meals.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Michael's C of E (Aided) Primary School as a Church of England school are good.**

The school's Christian character permeates all aspects of school life. Its Christian principles of love and respect are actively promoted making a significant impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children are caring, concerned and responsible members of their community and have been inspired by the Christian teaching and ethos of their school.

#### **Established strengths**

- The outstanding relationships within the school contribute to the extended family feeling within the school environment ensuring that pupils feel safe and secure.
- The quality of collective worship makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.
- The school's distinctive character enables all learners to grow in faith and in understanding of God.

#### **Focus for development**

- In religious education provide more opportunities for pupils to respond to challenging tasks.
- In RE ensure the quality of teaching enables all pupils to achieve their full potential.

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

The school's mission statement 'Following Jesus together, learning, growing and living' underpins everything the school sets out to do. A strong commitment to an inclusive ethos fulfils this very successfully. One pupil commented, 'We know God loves everyone because our Headteacher has told us.' All relationships are outstanding. They are characterised by Christian care and concern for others and contribute to pupil's spiritual development. Reward systems celebrated with the whole school encourage good behaviour and contribute well to the pupils' moral development. Personal reflection and prayer during RE, worship and at other times in the day, have a significant impact on pupils' spiritual development. Christian symbols are visible in classrooms and shared areas and good use is made by the school of

the entrance area to proclaim the school's Christian distinctiveness. There is a strong sense of trust and community feeling in the school. Pupils feel secure and recognise that their teachers have a very good knowledge of their individual achievements and learning needs. Adults and pupils alike commented on how much everyone enjoys coming to this school. Diversity is celebrated and every pupil is enabled to achieve and make progress through a range of well planned and well attended extra curricular activities. They talk about their enjoyment of these activities with enthusiasm and one pupil commented on how it enabled them all to play well together. High expectations for behaviour enable pupils to respond positively to all the school offers. The School Council gives excellent opportunities for children to express their ideas, act upon them and enjoy the impact they have on the daily life of the school. This has made a significant contribution to the pupil's personal development and raised awareness of personal responsibility. The school relates well to its own local community, and supports those in need in a way consistent with its values. The close proximity of the church is used effectively to provide pupils with a positive experience of worship in church and pupils speak positively about this.

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

Collective worship has a high profile in the life of the school. It provides a stimulus for the whole school community and is the means by which everyone is invited to reflect on the Christian message and what it inspires. It is carefully planned and the different contributions from the vicar, headteacher and staff are well integrated into the experiences offered to the pupils. Pupils and staff all take part and contribute extensively. Pupil's responses to collective worship are good. They come into the hall quietly and ready to participate. A candle is lit conveying to the pupils that worship has started. This has a positive impact on the pupils' spiritual development and it spills over into the rest of the school day as witnessed by the very good relationships that exist throughout the school. On the day of the inspection collective worship was based on Jesus' first temptation in the wilderness. Towards the end of worship each class was given a collection of stones to use in their weekly class based worship. This helps the pupils to appreciate the links between whole school and class based worship and to recognise the importance of each. Sufficient attention is given within school to the beliefs and worship of other faiths for all pupils to feel that different backgrounds and beliefs are recognised and appreciated. The local church is used to allow the whole school and parents to worship together encouraging the church congregation to identify more closely with the school whilst enabling parents and their children to see the very close links that exist between church and school. This happens on special occasions such as Christmas, Lent, Easter, Harvest, and the leaver's service and confirms to the pupils that worship is an important aspect of adult's lives. Pupils are actively involved in helping others less fortunate and this is particularly noticeable in their response to charities, for example, Water Aid, Harvest Appeal and Children in Need. The planned worship gives children a good awareness of the Anglican calendar and of the beliefs that Christians hold universally. It is also seen in the prayers that they write, and their awareness of the needs of others less fortunate than themselves. The Headteacher meets with pupils to discuss Collective Worship and their involvement. The vicar works with the headteacher in the provision of collective worship. The school is aware of its need to develop the established strategies for the evaluation of collective worship by pupils, staff and governors.

### **The effectiveness of religious education is satisfactory.**

Pupils' enjoyment of RE is evident in their positive response to questions asked and tasks set. They have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the language and concepts of Christianity and make good progress in some classes. The quality of teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to good. A class studying 'Jesus the teacher' acted out the story Jesus told of the Widow's mite and they were able to talk informatively about it. Good use was made of the Bible in this lesson and the pupils easily found the story in the Gospel. The teacher developed work previously taught. This reinforced for pupils the importance of the stories Jesus told and their relevance for their lives today. During other lessons pupils were achieving well below their potential. These lessons did not reinforce what pupils had already learnt nor develop their understanding. Very good use is made of the local church and its personnel to support RE learning and to promote understanding of the Anglican traditions. Planning for religious education is good throughout the school. Effective use is made of the diocesan syllabus as a basis for this. Assessment procedures for Religious Education are not

sufficiently well established to be effective. Marking of pupils' work, although adequate, is not always rigorous enough to help pupils know how they could improve.

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

The 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 supported by a united staff team and the governing body. The school's Christian purpose is clearly expressed in the mission statement in the prospectus and reflected in a range of school policies. The headteacher and staff at all levels set excellent examples. The partnerships that exist with the local community, including the church, are strengths of the school. This enhances pastoral care, family values and community spirit. The head's strong Christian vision and values are shared amongst all stakeholders and are lived out across the life of the school. The headteacher and staff are readily accessible and parents appreciate the 'open door' policy and regular consultations. Parents value the school as a Church school and the involvement of the local clergy. 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 school identifies its general strengths through self-evaluation, but the governors and staff have not undertaken any systematic evaluation of the distinctive Christian character of the school.

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