

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Cromwell Street,
Leeds
LS9 7SG

Diocese: Ripon and Leeds

Local authority: Leeds

Dates of inspection: 7 July 2009

Date of last inspection: July 2006

School's unique reference number: 108050

Headteacher: Mrs Liz Holliday

Inspector's name and number: Mrs G. Vere 463

School context

St. Peter's serves an inner city area of Leeds where the majority of its 230 pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds. The area is one of high deprivation with 36.9% of pupils eligible for free school meals and the number of pupils with learning difficulties above average. Both headteacher and deputy have been appointed since the last inspection, the headteacher having been appointed in September 2008

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Peter's Voluntary Aided as a Church of England school are outstanding

The commitment and vision of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and staff, supported by the governing body, continue to contribute very significantly to the success of this highly caring inner-city primary school. Pupils are enabled to flourish within its Christian family atmosphere. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to progress and further develop as an outstanding church school.

Established strengths

- The commitment and shared Christian vision of the headteacher, staff and governors
- The exemplary behaviour of pupils
- The distinctive and fully inclusive Christian ethos which values the contribution of every individual
- The mutually supportive relationship between the school and the church

Focus for development

- Sustain progress as an outstanding school and embed developments in religious education
- Strengthen the monitoring and evaluation skills of more recently appointed foundation governors to embed good practice.

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

The Christian ethos in the school is extremely strong and permeates every aspect of school life. There is total commitment from the headteacher and staff to the development of the whole child within this supportive, inclusive school community. Christian values are evident in every part of the school through documentation and displays, and particularly in the quality of relationships between pupils and pupils and staff. Pupils help and care for one another and are sensitive to each others' feelings. For example, a Year Two pupil writes to a friend 'when you are feeling low you have to hold your head up high'. Pupils also feel comfortable about discussing concerns with staff. They say, 'we all get on well like a family' and 'teachers are always there to help us'. Peer mediation training helps to develop mutual support between pupils. Behaviour is excellent in and around the building. Staff have worked extremely hard to create an atmosphere of calm, quiet industry within a demanding inner-city setting. Reward systems are in place for effort and acts of kindness, consistent with the school motto 'We Care'. Pupils clearly enjoy their work and feel cared for, valued and special. The school hears their

voice through the School Council and listens. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is actively pursued and nurtured through class reflections, conversations, writing, interactive displays, the prayer board and quiet places for thinking inside and outside the school. Pupils achieve well from below average starting points with tracking systems in place to analyse progress year on year, with planned interventions where appropriate. The expertise of staff, with the help of professional agencies, addresses very effectively the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Pupils' aspirations for the future are very positive as they feel the school is giving them confidence to fulfil themselves and be independent. Extra-curricular activities provide further enrichment, especially in singing, steel pans and the more recently formed knitting group. The community cohesion agenda is addressed by a carefully planned programme of activities and projects with a local, national and global focus, which enhances pupils' knowledge and understanding of diversity. They include regular exchange visits with Mowbray School, Sri Lanka, sponsorship of a child in Bolivia and links with a village school in North Yorkshire. The PACE group helps to ensure that Afro-Caribbean pupils reach their full potential.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship occupies a central place in the life of the school where Christian values are promoted and excellent use is made of prayer, silence and reflection to nurture pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development. Positive links with other areas of the curriculum are observed. Worship is led by staff, the Vicar of St. Peter's Church and the chaplain, who is the lay worker at St. Mary's church (currently worshipping on school premises). The headteacher, staff, vicar and school chaplain undertake the planning of worship with pupils and parents contributing from time to time. Some foundation governors attend worship regularly and two of them evaluate the quality of provision, reporting back to governors' meetings. Themes are discussed and evaluated by pupils in surveys and class reflections. One pupil says, 'it's something to think about for the day'. Pupils behave well and are extremely attentive and respectful, participating enthusiastically in an act of worship of a high standard. The importance of worship is affirmed by a display in the school entrance hall which reflects the worship theme, while prayers and bible readings in the worship cabinet are available for all to read. Several older pupils explore the Christian faith through confirmation classes, led by the school chaplain, and in a weekly prayer group, which is also attended by staff and members of the church community. Links with the church and appreciation of the Anglican tradition are further strengthened by joint Christian festival services, which many parents attend, and by regular Eucharist celebrations for school and community.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Levels of achievement in religious education are as good as or better than in core subject areas. Lessons observed were outstanding, with carefully differentiated, interactive activities, with planning based on the Diocesan Syllabus. Good quality resources and the latest technology are in use. In both key stages there was thoughtful, well presented written work on 'Church Symbols' and 'Paul', with a high level of discussion. One year five pupil comments, 'if everyone in the world was perfect, that could be a problem...' Pupils were fully engaged throughout and behaviour was exemplary. There were many planned opportunities for spiritual and moral development, including activities which supported understanding of the Christian faith and different faiths. Pupils are able to articulate clearly the Christian values which the school promotes and talk openly about their own beliefs, using appropriate vocabulary. Since the last inspection, there has been excellent progress in extending monitoring and evaluation strategies which inform planning. The subject leader is also well placed to assist and monitor other staff. All key areas in religious education are revisited and reinforced during worship and circle time. Religious education has its own section in the school development plan and is a regular agenda item at governors' meetings. Progress is reported on by foundation governors to the curriculum committee and samples of work are monitored to ensure progression.

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

The excellence of leadership and management has been sustained and consolidated since the appointment of the new headteacher. Governors feel that she articulates a clear Christian purpose for the school. The head teacher, strongly supported by the deputy headteacher, staff and governors, is firmly committed to further school improvement, based on continuous self-evaluation which is rigorous and embedded. The process actively involves all stakeholders. Staff feel that their contributions are recognised and valued and that the headteacher's collaborative style, reflecting a shared commitment to meet the needs of all pupils and families, is a significant factor in the school's success. The monitoring and evaluating of the school as a church school, by foundation governors, is secure and effective. The school continues to enjoy excellent relationships with St Peter's and St Mary's churches, as well as links with other city churches, which enhances provision for pupils. Governors have highly efficient and effective recruitment and induction procedures to explain and explore the school's Christian character. Close supportive interaction exists with local community groups, such as the Sudanese group, which meets in school every Saturday, different faith groups and other agencies. Parents feel well informed, appreciating the parenting group, the parents' forum and the welcome and support for new families. They say 'How lucky we are to have such a wonderful school in this part of Leeds' and 'this is a Christian school that truly fulfils its 'we care' motto.