

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Westhoughton Parochial Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

The Fairways
Westhoughton
Bolton
BL5 3NZ

Diocese: Manchester

Local authority: Bolton

Dates of inspection: 10.03.08

Date of last inspection: 11.03.04

School's unique reference number: 105237

Headteacher: Mr G Burrows (Executive Headteacher)

Inspector's name and number: Barbara Kinch 475

School context

Westhoughton Parochial is a Voluntary Aided school situated close to the town centre of Westhoughton to the west of Bolton. The majority of the children come from socially advantaged backgrounds and the FSM, SEN and ethnic minority percentages are all below the national average. The Ofsted Inspection in June 2007 placed the school in Special Measures. Since January 2008 the school has been led by an executive headteacher prior to the appointment of a new head to the substantive post during this academic year. The latest monitoring visit has reported satisfactory progress and there are now effective action plans in place for Worship and RE.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Westhoughton Parochial as a Church of England school are satisfactory

There are welcoming displays which signify Westhoughton Parochial as a Christian school. Symbols of its Christian foundation in the form of crosses, prayers form part of displays in the entrance areas and those in classrooms reflect topics covered in RE. Christian values are evident in the practices in school, but these are not made explicit in the mission statement, the self evaluation and policy documentation.

Established strengths

- Very good relationships which exist between all members of the school community
- Strong and positive links with the clergy and church community
- The self esteem and value which the pupils feel and articulate
- The behaviour of the pupils based on a keen sense of right and wrong

Focus for development

- To establish a clear Christian vision for the school, rooted in shared values which are agreed and understood by all stakeholders
- To make explicit in the self evaluation those practices and outcomes which reflect the school's Christian Foundation and celebrate them more fully
- To maximise the opportunities for varied and more challenging activities in RE.
- To develop more rigorous approaches to planning, evaluation and training in RE and Collective Worship.

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

Current practice at Westhoughton is satisfactory with some developing good features. Good, positive relationships ensure that the children feel happy, safe and cared for and lead to their saying that they enjoy school. They refer to it as a '*Bully Free Zone*' and that the school is '*full*

of learning'. The Christian character of the school impacts in their care and concern for each other but it is not clear where other values influence policy and decision making. Whilst there are individual examples of pupils' effective spiritual development, a consistent approach across the school is not apparent. Displays around school and in classrooms reflect aspects of the RE curriculum and some examples show a good insight into where values can impact on spiritual development, notably in the entrance hall, a prayer tree and 'We are the work of God's Hands' with the biblical text reference.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

The response of the children in the act of worship observed was good, they readily answered questions and engaged in both singing and prayer with meaning and enthusiasm especially with the ocarina accompaniment from children in years 5 and 6. The pace, balance and variety was good. The children are clearly comfortable with the experience and key stage 1 and 2 children understand the significance of the Christian symbols used. They knew that lighted candle represented *'the light of God'* and that worship was *'a special time to think about Jesus'*; some said that *'it cheers you up'*. They also felt that the presence of the entire school was important to bring everyone together. The children are familiar with the Lord's Prayer and the Collect for Purity. Parents attend some of the key services in Church and class assemblies in school. The existing policy for worship does however give a very limited view of the principles and practice and does not make clear the contribution that worship makes to spiritual development or of the centrality of worship in the life of the school. The executive headteacher has a new draft policy which when shared with the Governors and staff may go a long way to addressing this.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

The current policy is not specific in terms of planning or progression or in describing a range of learning opportunities which offer challenge and promote spiritual growth. QCA, Diocesan guidance and that of the local authority are used but the documentation is unclear in how this fits together into a cohesive policy. The lessons observed in both key stages were satisfactory with some good features, the children were involved but there was insufficient differentiation and challenge in the activities. Relationships were good and the children were able to draw on previous learning but as, in each class, all the groups were engaged in the same activity there were missed opportunities for more personal development. Previous learning was evident as children in a KS2 class were able to talk about emotions and attitudes sensitively in the parable of the Unforgiving Servant because of the first hand experience of learning through drama. Some KS1 children were able to explain that a parable was a story with a particular message and to transfer meanings to their lives. Overall the children do exhibit both ability and awareness which is not being harnessed especially for the more able and gifted. A good analysis of RE, carried out by the head, who is currently acting as the coordinator, highlights areas which are in need of further development and a programme is planned which includes whole school strategies, appropriate learning styles, assessment, training opportunities, involving parents and strategies for monitoring. This indicates the capacity for effective development in the future.

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

The governors and the headteacher are working on establishing more rigorous approaches to strategic planning and the school is engaged in an intensive programme of school improvement. Training to enable teachers to gain knowledge and confidence in RE is not in place but the analyses and plans highlight this as a priority for the future. There are good and strong links with the Church and community and the incumbent is actively involved in the life of the school through worship and as a governor. Currently there is insufficient evidence of an explicit vision for the school, based on Christian values which are agreed, understood and shared by parents, pupils, teachers and governors and which would enable effective monitoring and evaluation to inform further the development of the Christian ethos.