

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Christ Church, Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Colne

Keighley Road,
Colne,
Lancashire
BB8 7AA

Diocese:	Blackburn
Local authority:	Lancashire
Dates of inspection:	28 th February 2013
Date of last inspection:	22 nd November 2007
School's unique reference number:	119433
Headteacher:	Mr Andrew Peers
Inspector's name and number:	Mrs Ruth Wall (548)

School Context

Christ Church, Church of England Primary School is situated on the edge of Colne. The school serves the local community as well as the wider locality, including the centre of Colne. There are 179 children on roll. The majority of children are white British and are from a mix of socio-economic backgrounds. Since the last inspection there have been significant changes in staffing which have included the appointment of a new headteacher.

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

This is a very friendly and happy school with a caring Christian ethos in which all members of the school community are highly valued and nurtured as individuals. There is strong and committed leadership by the headteacher, supported by the staff, governors and parents. The emphasis on the Christian values of love, forgiveness and reconciliation enables all children to reach their full potential in both personal and academic development.

Established strengths

- The visionary leadership of the headteacher and his success in embedding Christian values within the daily life of the school.
- The way in which the school operates as a highly effective Christian community.
- Children's broad learning experiences which contribute very effectively to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Focus for development

- To support children's progress in religious education (RE) by ensuring that they know the level they have achieved to inform next steps in their learning.
- Develop the depth of learning about non-Christian faiths in RE.
- Ensure that a system is put in place for governors to be involved in procedures for monitoring and evaluating RE.

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

The school's mission statement: 'Together we learn, together we achieve, together we grow in the light of Christ', in the words of a governor, 'summarises this school perfectly.' From comments made by staff, parents, children and governors it is clear that this statement is understood and lived out in all areas of school life. A teacher said, 'Living the faith is as important as proclaiming the faith.' The school emphasises the core Christian values of love, forgiveness and reconciliation which, the headteacher explained, 'are central to all we do in school.' There are excellent relationships throughout the school community. A member of staff spoke of what it meant to her to be working in a church school, 'It's had a big impact on

me, you can feel the difference,' Children agreed that the best thing about their school was, 'it's a big family'. Children are polite, friendly and very well behaved. A teacher explained that children are taught how to act and respond to others through reference to the Christian values. She said, 'We observe children living the Christian faith out in everyday life.' Children's spiritual development is good and is promoted effectively by the challenging religious education and inspiring acts of worship. Children are self confident because they benefit from the opportunities provided for them to take responsibility. They are encouraged to follow the example of Jesus in demonstrating concern for world issues and they recognise the need to work together to help others less fortunate than themselves. Parents feel that they can approach the staff at any time to express their views and that they will be listened to. They speak highly of the school's ethos and believe the Christian distinctiveness adds to this strength. Parents spoke of their decision to choose the school for their children because of its good reputation as a church school. The school is challenged by the lack of space but has made every effort to ensure that the environment is well ordered and stimulating. Christian symbols and high quality displays throughout the school reflect the fact that Christian values are important here.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is a central feature of school life and is respected and enjoyed by all staff and children. The children see it as a very important part of the school day and speak enthusiastically about its place in school life. One child said she really enjoyed the stories about Jesus. All members of staff attend and take a full part in worship and this gives a very positive message to the children about the importance of this daily act. Different Christian values are explored each half term. These values are introduced in whole school worship each week and, through class worship, themes are explored in greater detail and at an appropriate level. Teachers and children then share their findings with the whole school. The quality of children's response can be seen in an attractive worship display. This develops over time and records their thoughts, activities, prayers and drawings. Children spoke of their enjoyment in being responsible for planning and leading whole school worship at the end of each half term before a new Christian value is introduced. The worship observed, on the theme of hope, was jointly led by the vicar and headteacher. Christian symbols and music contributed to an appropriate and spiritually uplifting atmosphere which was clearly what the children were familiar with. Children of all ages are at ease in responding to questions in whole school worship. Singing is a key feature of the school and this was demonstrated in the enthusiasm with which they sang a favourite Christian song and the Lord's prayer. Under the direction of the deputy headteacher, an accomplished musician, children have used their skills to enrich the lives of others in the wider community. Much emphasis goes into planning celebrations of the main Christian festivals and, together with the monthly service held in Christ Church, gives the school and church community a much valued time of worshipping together. These occasions make a significant contribution to children's spiritual development and provide them with a good understanding of Anglican tradition as they take an active part.

The effectiveness of religious education is good

Religious education (RE) has the status of a core subject and supports the Christian ethos of the school. The teaching of RE is consistently good and this enables the children to reach standards which are good. As a result of teaching which challenges their thinking and inspires their interest the children make good progress. A wide variety of teaching and learning strategies are used in RE to take account of the different learning styles of the children. These include role play, art, music and multi-media resources, as well as visits from people representing their faith, and visits to places of worship. In the lessons observed, children's behaviour and response was very good. The teachers made good use of open-ended questions and provided activities to stimulate creative thinking. Tasks set were carefully matched to children's abilities so that each child was motivated and challenged appropriately. In a Key Stage 1 lesson the teacher skilfully used the 'Godly Play' story-telling technique to engage the children in the Bible story of 'Blind Bartimaeus' with children responding to times of stillness for individual reflection. RE has been a subject of focused school improvement since the last inspection. The RE subject leader, with the support of the leadership team, has

worked with a clear purpose and sense of direction in driving through initiatives to raise standards of attainment. She has benefited from diocesan training and now provides informed and valued support to other teachers. Schemes of work follow the diocesan syllabus and reflect the school's Christian foundation. Children spoke with enthusiasm about the times they have engaged and interacted with children from different cultural backgrounds. These include their involvement in the Building Bridges interfaith community project and the Pendle small school network 'Arts Around the World' week which enabled children to work with peers from a variety of race, religions and cultures. Of particular note was the multi-faith week where the whole school enjoyed a range of activities which contributed to the children's understanding and appreciation of faiths, cultures and traditions different from their own. RE helps children to draw comparisons between faiths and opportunities to relate to their own faith, although the study of other faiths lacks depth. Assessment procedures are in place and working effectively to inform teaching and learning, however, children are not informed of the level they are achieving and what they need to do to progress to the next level. There is no system in place for governors to be involved in the process of monitoring and evaluating standards of teaching and learning in RE.

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

The headteacher is an effective leader with a clear Christian vision for the development of the school as a church school. He lives the vision, modelling relationships which mirror Christian values. He is very active in encouraging, monitoring and challenging the school community to realise the vision. He is supported very well by the deputy headteacher, governors and all members of the school community. He and the previous vicar worked together effectively to raise the focus on Christian values and this, he said, 'has had the biggest impact on the school.' Building on this, the staff, children and governors have recently been involved in the task of collectively drawing up a new mission statement, with values and aims which they describe as being 'at the very heart of everything we do.' The governors show high levels of commitment and work very hard on the school's behalf. Addressing the issue raised at the last inspection they have taken advantage of diocesan training and say this has helped to clarify their role and develop their confidence. They agreed with one governor who said, 'We are a close-knit group and are all working for the same goal'. The school responds to parents' concerns raised in the annual questionnaire. Children feel comfortable in expressing their views and are confident that their suggestions are valued. Members of staff have a shared commitment to improvement which is evident in levels of planning, support and positive relationships. Everyone's contribution is valued and appreciated. The school is committed to the professional development of teachers to prepare them for future leadership of church schools. The school's own self-evaluation portrays an accurate picture of its strengths and shows a clear sense of direction for further improvement. They are right to be proud of its outstanding achievements.

SIAS report February 2013 Christ Church C. of E. Primary School, Colne BB8 7AA