

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Heyhouses Endowed Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
Clarendon Road North
Lytham St Annes
Lancashire
FY8 3EE

Diocese: Blackburn
Local authority: Lancashire
Date of inspection: 14th February 2013
Date of last inspection: 3rd April 2008
School's unique reference number: 119693
Headteacher: Mrs Elizabeth Hodgson
Inspector's name and number: Mr Mike Graham (286)

School context

Heyhouses CE School serves a mixed semi-urban area. The school occupies two sites. A building programme, which will expand and improve the provision, is imminent. Most children are local and of white British heritage. The percentage of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. A private nursery is located within the school grounds. The staffing is relatively stable and the school has a long-standing reputation for excellence within the local community.

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

The school is a haven of Christian care and love. Together with the local church, it plays an important role in the community. The links with the parish church of St Anne and also with St Margaret's are strong and mutually beneficial. Christian values are explicitly placed at the centre of school life. Worship and religious education (RE) are excellent and make a significant impact on the children's spiritual growth.

Established strengths

- The loving Christian relationships within the family of the school
- The Christian values evident in every aspect of school life
- The excellence of the worship and its impact on the children's spiritual development

Focus for development

- Involve the whole school community in a review of the mission statement
- Expand the structured evaluation of worship to include the children

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

The school's Christian values make a strong impact on the children's personal development. The loving and caring ethos extends to all children and adults, including parents and carers. The pastoral team, making excellent use of the sensory room with small groups and individuals, have 'worked miracles' as the headteacher succinctly put it. All members of the staff team demonstrate a Christ-like compassion in their work with the children and with each other. The vicar said that the core values of the school were 'Love for the children and for God'. Through service, individual children mature and develop as Year 5 'red caps' and Year 6 'gold caps', buddies, monitors and members of the school council. These roles are taken on with mature grace. The help given to younger children and those in need at playtimes and indeed throughout the day is effective and impressive. Innumerable acts of kindness make this school a special place. Examples included the good manners towards visitors and to each other, and the 'Carry on, sorry', from a teacher to a Y5 boy who was slightly interrupted by her. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children is exceptional. Acceptance and inclusion are the norm, which was summed up by a child who said, 'In our school we greet everyone. We think of the school as a family'. The school environment promotes spiritual

development through bright and interactive displays. Many of these displays relate directly to RE and worship, and they draw children and visitors alike into times of reflection. The whole school family takes pride in helping to keep the rich provision of garden and quiet areas in the grounds and the building tidy and clean. This care supports a deep appreciation of God's creation.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The children are extremely positive about worship and talk about it with excitement and in depth. They speak freely about the impact made by the songs, bible stories, drama, reflection times and prayer. One boy said that the good thing about worship was that you can 'start the day with a clean slate!' Children were particularly enthusiastic about the frequent occasions when they were involved in planning and leading worship. All staff and the vicar also assist in leading worship regularly. They offer diverse approaches that support children's spiritual development. Children and staff are thus reminded that God loves them and they are special to Him. The worship sessions seen were relaxed yet reverent and the theme was life as a journey, linking with a key topic in RE and including the Christian values of faith, hope and love. The children and adults were clearly expectant and well prepared for worship. Inspiring story-telling, participation by children and excellent rapport between leaders and children were evident. Prayer is a frequent feature of school life, at lunchtime, home-time and during lessons when appropriate. The sincerity and relevance of worship ensure that children and staff gain inspiration, are enabled to grow spiritually and are personally affirmed. Anglican greetings and responses, the Lord's Prayer and relevant prayers are regularly used and children take part and lead with understanding and enthusiasm. The vicar helps the children in their leading of worship on a regular basis in school, and in church on special occasions. A parent commented, 'Father David is so approachable. He's part of the school'. The school choir are also involved in worship at St Margaret's church occasionally, broadening further the range of worship experienced by children. Worship is evaluated regularly with staff, children, parents and governors involved, but children are not fully integrated into the system.

The effectiveness of religious education is outstanding

Standards in RE are extremely high and the children's levels of achievement are excellent. The evidence for this in portfolios of work, the children's books and from their discussions during the inspection was conclusive. Teaching and learning are highly effective, with strong leadership from the co-ordinator and her team. These are having a positive effect on the spiritual development of the children, and are supported by excellent planning, monitoring and evaluation. There is a welcome emphasis on the impact of faith on a believer, not just on the facts about religion. Independent learning and creative use of the internet feature significantly. Outstanding teaching was observed in three RE lessons. Excellent practice was evident, including the staff working as a team to encourage full involvement by all children. There was good use of modern technology, a range of activities to suit all abilities, sensitive encouragement of good behaviour and a high quality of interaction and discussion within groups. The progression in spiritual and moral development is significant. The vicar makes invaluable contributions to lessons, including the preparation for confirmation sessions, which cover the basics of Christian faith without the slightest pressure on children to be confirmed. Study of non-Christian faiths is thorough and well developed, with visits to places of worship and from members of other faith groups. Two Moslem parents have made valuable contributions by sharing their faith and culture with the children. Regular 'Faith Days' immerse the children in the various aspects of living a life of faith in a variety of ways. A Year 6 girl stated that 'It's good to be aware of other faiths (so) you can't accidentally offend them'.

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

The headteacher, leadership team and governors promote a distinctive school vision based on Christian values with enthusiasm and commitment. The vicar is fully involved, and all governors are also committed to the vision. The mission statement does not embody the vision as well as it might however. The headteacher's own faith shines out in everything she does. She stated

that her aim is for the school to be 'the presence of Christ in St Anne's' and to 'reach out to families'. Parents, staff and children are clear about the significance of the Christian basis for the school's life. Members of staff are excellent role models for the children, and in fact the children themselves are living the vision in a powerful way. The vicar described the school as 'a huge Christian family'. Areas for development from the previous report have been fully addressed. Wholehearted support for in-service training, teamwork, coaching and good delegation encourage potential church school leaders. Community cohesion is strong, and it is helped considerably by the close relationship with the church. There are joint activities such as 'Messy Church' and harvest baskets with individually written prayers from the children to elderly members of the community. Parents are delighted with and very proud of their school and they are given regular opportunities for feedback. Comments included, 'The Christian side of the school is really important'.

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