



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Rufford Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School

Flash Lane
Rufford
Lancashire
L40 1SN

Diocese: Blackburn

Local authority: Lancashire

Date of inspection: 18th September 2014

Date of last inspection: 9th December 2009

School's unique reference number: 119483

Headteacher: Miss A R Farrington

Inspector's name and number: Gail Fullbrook NS530

School context

Rufford Church of England Primary School serves the rural community of Rufford, a village between the towns of Ormskirk and Preston. Currently there are 130 children on roll who are mainly from a White British background. The number of children with special educational needs or eligible for free school meals is well below national averages.

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

- The vision of the headteacher, effectively supported by staff and governors, has established a distinctive Christian ethos.
- The school's core Christian values have an outstanding impact on the children's attitudes and behaviour.
- Through well planned acts of worship, the spiritual development of children and adults is nourished and developed.

Areas to improve

- Consolidate monitoring, feedback and self-evaluation in religious education (RE) to ensure coverage of the scheme used and the systematic assessment of the attainment and progress of the children.

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

All members of this lively school community are keen to share how the Christian character of the school contributes to good attendance and achievement. Interesting and inspiring lessons across all year groups ensure that children make at least good and sometimes outstanding progress. They show a delightful love of learning and an excitement for discovering more about the world. The introduction of a core set of Christian values since the last inspection

has had an outstanding impact upon the Christian character of the school and upon the children's understanding of what it means to be Christian. Christian values are firmly embedded into the life of the school and the children have an excellent understanding of how the values impact on their relationships with others and their attitude to their work. One child, when talking about the values, said, 'They help us to reflect on our own behaviour and to question the choices we make'. The children work hard and are confident and resilient. They are respectful of the needs of others and recognise the importance of doing their best in order to achieve well. The Christian character of the school has a clear impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children. Strong links with the local community and the involvement of the children in numerous projects through the school year develop the children's commitment to serving others. Through involvement with Fox Street Homeless Community, the Children's Society and the Pearl of Africa Children's Choir, the children have a very good awareness of diversity and difference. Excellent relationships underpin the life of the school. Parents talk of selecting the school because of the kindness and courtesy shown by the children and of the school's friendly welcome and compassion when families face difficult times. Time to reflect is built into lessons and worship and children are encouraged to question and to share their thoughts and beliefs. One child spoke of the importance of sharing the 'Spirit of God' around the school. Children respond sensitively to the human experiences of other children and recognise the part they can play in the healing process. RE supports the Christian character of the school. In an excellent example of this, Year 1 and 2 children had a star placed in the palm of their hand to remind them through the day that they are precious to God.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship makes an outstanding contribution to the life of the school and its high priority has impact on the spiritual development of the school community. The parish priest comments that everything stops for worship and that even on busy days when there is much to do time is still found for the school community to meet and worship together. Children and adults find worship inspiring and readily share examples of times when it has supported or challenged them. One child made reference to an act of worship that helped him to understand his sadness when his grandfather died whilst another talked of times when prayer helps her to make good decisions. The lighting of a candle and an opening sentence remind all present of God's presence in worship. Words of scripture read by a child link the theme of the worship to biblical teaching. Children readily make links between biblical stories they hear and the school's core Christian values. Times of silence encourage children to reflect on message of the day. Many staff lead worship and children enjoy the variety of experience this offers. Worship is well planned and includes celebration of many of the festivals of the Church year. Children regularly plan and lead worship and enjoy developing the worship theme in a way that is meaningful to them. Eucharistic worship takes place each term and the children have an excellent understanding of the importance of worship to Christians and of the symbolic nature of the bread and wine. Children value times when they pray with their class and one child talked of prayerfully placing a stone in a jar on a day when no one would play with her. Lessons sometimes begin with prayer, particularly when the lesson is dealing with a sensitive issue. One child shared the connection they made between the story of the Good Samaritan and the ways in which friendship sometimes happens in unusual circumstances. Children of all ages have a clear understanding of the three forms of God and older children talk maturely of what each means to them. For example, 'God is further away from us so the Spirit helps us to know what to do.' The parish priest, who leads worship on Fridays talks of his role in evaluating and embedding the theme of the week and of the insight this brings to the children's depth of understanding. The school uses this to support the evaluation of the impact of worship on the children. The school is currently considering ways in which the children's response to worship can be recorded to inform future planning and act as a record of the spiritual development of the children.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The teaching of RE is good, sometimes outstanding, and has considerable strengths. Children enjoy lessons and the skills of interpretation and reflection are well used to deepen understanding and knowledge. They ask good questions and show an ability to think creatively. Children are comfortable sharing thoughts and ideas, even when they are deeply personal. Consequently when exploring the question how Jesus can be with us even if he is no longer here, children in Year 6 show a depth of spiritual understanding in their responses. One child commented that he 'found it comforting that my cousin's soul is with me every day', while another commented, 'I think people are safe with God and we will always remember them'. Children are given time to engage with Christian belief and enjoy pondering questions such as when Jesus might come again. Through the use of questions posed around the school children are encouraged to apply Christian principles to everyday life. Parents speak of the strong element of learning through religion that is promoted by the school. The tangible impact of this is that children are thoughtful rather than judgemental when considering issues of importance to them. Children have an excellent knowledge of key aspects of Christianity but are not as secure in their understanding of other faiths and cultures studied. The curriculum is well planned although opportunities to assess knowledge and understanding are not recorded in such a way that they enable the school to track the progress of children effectively. Regular and systematic monitoring of RE in terms of the quality of teaching and learning, coverage of the curriculum and the use of assessment procedures is not yet robust. Christian values are developed within RE and consequently RE makes a significant contribution to the Christian distinctiveness of the school.

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

The headteacher and her staff team live out and promote the school's distinctively Christian values and effectively share their vision by example. Consequently the excellent Christian vision of the school is understood. This has a positive impact on the children's good standards of achievement, excellent behaviour and attitudes. Strategic plans focussing on the distinctive Christian characteristics of the school are regularly monitored by governors. Provision for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements. Parents are appreciative of the school's open door policy and recognise the commitment of the school to the well-being of the children and their families. They refer to the school as being a 'very caring community' and place great value upon the skill of the school in drawing out the best from each child. Since the last inspection, displays and reflective areas around the school have been developed to engage and challenge the children. These have a good impact on the children's excellent understanding of the core Christian values of the school. The school values its relationship with the diocese. It makes good use of the resources produced and training offered. Consequently the professional development of teachers relating to their work in a church school is well planned and has a beneficial impact on the Christian character of the school. The school plays an important role in the community of Rufford. For example, children understand that they have a responsibility to the village and in recent weeks have supported the planting of trees adjacent to the playing field. Strong and effective links with the church result in children regularly leading Sunday worship in church and recognising that they are an important part of the church community. School and church events are mutually supported. The parish priest speaks of the blessing of people determined to make a difference in school and church and of the school's ethos of respect and awareness of God around them. The children show enthusiasm in their response to charitable appeals and understand that their actions make a difference to the lives of others.