



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Chorley St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Eaves Lane

Chorley

Lancashire

PR6 0DX

Diocese: **Blackburn**

Local authority: Lancashire

Date of inspection: 6 November 2014

Date of last inspection: December 2009

School's unique reference number: 119806

Headteacher: Helen Wright

Inspector's name and number: Ruth Wall (548)

School context

St. Peter's is a larger than the average primary school. The number on roll has risen to 282 pupils in the last six years. The school serves a mixed urban area with some social and economic deprivation. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special education needs and/ or disabilities is higher than is seen in Lancashire and nationally. St Peter's Church is in a period of interregnum and a replacement vicar has not yet been appointed.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Chorley St Peter's as a Church of England school are good

- Christian values are clearly expressed and demonstrated by children and staff and underpin the positive relationships between all members of the community and the good behaviour of the children.
- The care, nurture and guidance of all children show the distinct Christian ethos of the school in action.
- The school provides broad and creative learning experiences which deepen children's spiritual understanding across the curriculum, especially in religious education (RE) and collective worship.

Areas to improve

- Raise all teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve academically and make sure pupils have challenging targets to aim for, which they can understand and that help them to further improve their work.
- Develop governor expertise and confidence in carrying out robust procedures for self-evaluation which focus on the impact of provision for all children and use this to inform strategic planning.

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

The school has focussed on ensuring that the Christian message behind their mission statement, 'Love, Challenge, Inspire' is made explicit and understood by the school community. 'We believe in sharing God's love, whilst challenging each other to succeed and inspiring a love of learning so that we can reach our potential'. Trust and compassion are two of the Christian values identified by the school on their beautiful 'Fruits of the Vine' banner displayed in the hall. Newly appointed teachers speak about the 'welcome and support' they have received and that staff 'exemplify Christian values, especially in their care and stewardship of the children'. Children feel safe and valued. Their efforts and achievements are acknowledged and celebrated. In consequence, their behaviour and attitude to learning are very good. Expectations throughout the school are consistently linked to the school's core Christian values. The school is effective in using data to track children's attainment. They have identified the areas where intervention strategies have been successful in raising the achievement and progress of children. They are now rightly focussing on individuals and groups of children who need to achieve challenging academic targets. The school is proud of its success in raising the attendance of pupils. There is a broad and rich curriculum which contributes fully to the children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. Activities include promoting a responsibility to, and appreciation of, God's creation. High quality displays and Christian signs and symbols emphasise the school's distinctiveness and support the children's spiritual awareness and development extremely well. Of particular note is the frieze where every child's self portrait is displayed, 'within the protective arms of Jesus and St Peter'. Through a range of activities, including the annual 'Christmas around the world' activities, children are made aware that Christianity is a global world faith. Children understand the need to help others less fortunate than themselves through their Christian service. They speak fondly of the three guide dogs for the blind they support and look forward to their visits to school. The school is both distinctive in its Christian character and inclusive in its approach to diversity.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

High quality worship planning includes Christian themes, with a strong emphasis on Christian values and important Christian festivals. This enables children to have an understanding of the nature of worship, the Christian faith and Anglican traditions and practice. Worship makes a significant impact on the lives of pupils. Worship enables children to develop an understanding of the qualities of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit through the themes and stories which are included in the planning cycle. During the celebration of Pentecost all children created and added their own symbolic artistic 'flame' to a beautiful display. A title was chosen inspired by a Year 2 child's response that it was, 'God's flame of love'. Of particular significance for the school community is the 'Easter garden' which is created on the school stage each year. This is used as a reflection and prayer point during the school's 'Holy Week' activities. The two coordinators agree that the activities are 'very theatrical' and 'spark off meaningful discussions in classes'. A Diocesan visitor marvelled that it had 'brought the story of Easter to life'. A highly active children's worship group lead school worship each week, reflecting on the worship theme and celebrating each other's achievements. They are also involved in reading Bible stories to younger children. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are outstanding and effective. Evaluating the impact of worship a child reflects, 'worship is better because children have started leading it'. Other comments from children have resulted in school improvement, including 'having more visitors to speak in worship'. The school community are encouraged to reflect on worship themes in a variety of innovative ways. Ninety decorative fish were designed and made by families at home to represent St Peter as the 'Fisher of men'. Music is used effectively to deepen spirituality and children sing with great enthusiasm. Children write their own personal prayers which they share in worship times and in class. Parents say they enjoy joining their children for worship in school and in St Peter's Church.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Children make extremely good progress as is evidenced in portfolios and children's written work. The subject leader monitors RE thoroughly using observations, book scrutiny and cross-checking of standards. This monitoring ensures that all children are experiencing creative and challenging RE and that there is an excellent balance between learning about and learning from religion. A system for assessing children's achievements is now fully embedded and used effectively to track progress and determine next steps in learning. The subject leader has benefitted from training and provides informed and valued support to colleagues ensuring that work is of a high quality. Children have a thorough knowledge of the Bible and the life of Jesus. A governor has been instrumental in ensuring that children's knowledge and understanding of other faiths is now enhanced through a variety of activities, including 'Faith Trails' to places of worship and visits from members of other faiths. The impact of these initiatives has resulted in the school achieving a distinctive church school award for multi-faith work. Children say they really enjoy RE and often find it challenging. One Muslim child says, 'my challenge was to do a presentation about the Festival of Eid to my class'. A friend says, 'Yes - he taught us'. A variety of effective teaching and learning strategies are used, including role play, art and craft and multi-media resources. Through a 'powerful' cross-curricular RE topic, inspired by an award winning novel *'The Promise'*, children demonstrated their knowledge and understanding of spiritual belief and how this impacts on themselves and those around them. A Year 4 child wrote, 'Everything transformed. A seed of joy had grown in my soul'. On visiting the school the author commented on how the children had 'really tuned into' the environmental message and 'the possibility of personal change'.

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

The headteacher and senior leaders promote Christian values as rooted in their faith. They set high expectations for staff and expect Christian values to permeate all areas of school life and beyond to the community. Governors are supportive of the school's Christian foundation. They are effective in their role as 'critical friends' to the leadership team and in supporting teachers as link governors to classes. Leaders have rightly identified the need to further develop governor expertise in carrying out robust procedures for self-evaluation which focus on the impact of provision for all children. Leaders and governors recognise the importance of the school's Christian character in creating an ethos which supports effective learning. There are a clear set of priorities in school action plans with a focus on continuing to raise the academic achievement of all learners. The school have maintained good links with members of St Peter's Church during the present absence of a vicar. Links with other churches have also been formed which are proving to be an asset to the school in promoting a positive image of the church. RE and collective worship are led with outstanding energy and enthusiasm, and a genuine desire to continue to seek ways to improve further. Provision is made for staff to attend training in order to support succession planning for future leadership in church schools. Parents recognise the distinctive Christian qualities of the school and speak highly of the respect with which they and their children are treated. They are consulted on a variety of church school issues and appreciate being kept informed of school activities through regular school newsletters, including the theme for each week's worship. Children are proud of their role in decision making through the school council and worship group. The school uses its resources effectively to nurture disadvantaged pupils and support families. Members of the school community speak highly of the family support worker who they say is 'amazing'. Her work is rooted in the Christian ethos of the school. The well-being of all members of the school community is a high priority. A parent says, 'seeing my own children flourish in the Christian faith here inspired me to begin my own journey to become a teacher'.

