

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Burnley St. Stephen's Church of England Primary School**

Woodgrove Road,  
Burnley,  
Lancashire,  
BB11 3EJ

#### **Diocese: Blackburn**

Local authority: Lancashire

Date of inspection: Friday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2013

Date of last inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> October 2009

School's unique reference number: 119486

Headteacher: Mr. Ian Wilson

Inspector's name and number: Mrs. Anne B. Woodcock

#### **School context**

St. Stephen's school serves a mixed socio-economic community in south-east Burnley. The vast majority of pupils are of white British heritage. The number of pupils receiving free school meals is above average and increasing. Pupil mobility is higher than average and increasing. The 201 pupils are taught in single age classes.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Burnley St. Stephen's Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are good.**

The leadership and vision of the headteacher is firmly based on Christian principles and supported by dedicated staff and governors. They all work to inspire pupils to achieve their potential in an atmosphere of trust and respect. Strong links with the church contribute well to the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school, supporting and enhancing pupils' spiritual development.

#### **Established strengths**

- The caring and nurturing relationships, clearly based on the Christian values, which support pupils and their families.
- The respectful and positive attitudes of pupils.
- The Christian vision and example of the headteacher, senior leaders and governors.
- The strong links with the church which support effectively pupils' spiritual development.

#### **Focus for development**

- Establish a formal system, to monitor and evaluate collective worship, which involves staff and pupils, informs future planning and leads to improvement.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to plan, lead and evaluate worship
- Involve pupils in assessing their own work in religious education (RE).
- Extend and develop evaluation of the school as a church school to inform future planning.

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

Pupils feel safe, happy and nurtured in school. They enjoy their learning and are eager to achieve the goals set for them. Pupils have great trust in and respect for their teachers. They say, "Our teachers listen to us, help us sort out our problems and are always fair." High expectations and effective teaching support the needs of all learners. Pupils make good progress and all are able to contribute to the life of the school. Behaviour is generally good. Although they do not express Christian values explicitly, pupils demonstrate their understanding of respect, friendship and love in the way in which they support each other. "You treat others as you want to be treated," explained one pupil, "because that is what Jesus said." They co-operate well and show a genuine interest in developing their skills and abilities. Older pupils act as monitors and play pals, supporting the needs of the younger children and taking their responsibilities seriously. Pupils' personal development is good. They benefit from a

range of extra-curricular sports, music and arts clubs which are well-attended and enjoyed by pupils of all ages and abilities. Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is supported through visits to the theatre, museums and residential trips. Effective use is made of the local environment. For example, pupils work with the Friends of Towneley, planting wild flower meadows and bulbs. Pupils have a growing understanding and recognition of their place in God's world. They support a range of local and national charities such as Macmillan and Comic Relief, planning and organising the fund raising activities themselves. The recent 'Send a Cow to Africa' project enhanced pupils' understanding of global issues.

**The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.**

Worship is an important feature of the daily life of the school. It is well-planned and is firmly based on Christian values and Bible teaching. Pupils say that they enjoy their worship experiences, particularly when they are involved in acting out a story or responding to questions. They have a positive attitude, explaining that what they hear and think about in worship helps them to make important decisions about how to behave when faced with a problem. Pupils show reverence and respect during worship, entering and settling quietly and responding thoughtfully. The strong links with the church support and enrich worship. The vicar leads worship regularly and other members of the church attend and lead some acts of worship. Pupils are very familiar with Anglican traditions and practices through regular Eucharist services, such as those held on Ash Wednesday and Ascension Day in church or in school. Parents and members of the church community attend these services. Prayer is a key feature of worship. Pupils are familiar with traditional prayers such as the Lord's Prayer and graces. They write and use their own prayers, which can be seen on prayer trees and other displays around school. Pupils are given time to reflect and consider their own response to the themes discussed during worship. As one pupil explained, "You think about how others might feel and put yourself in their shoes." Music plays an important part in daily worship. Children sing a range of songs and hymns with joy and enthusiasm. Parents attend class-led worship and special festival services in church in considerable numbers, valuing the opportunity to share in their children's work and praise. Pupils really enjoy these occasions as they are able to participate actively in the delivery of worship. However, pupils have limited opportunity to plan, lead and evaluate worship, which is a focus for development. A comprehensive record of themes and resources is maintained. However, evaluation and monitoring of the impact of worship is limited and is an area for development.

**The effectiveness of the religious education (RE) is good.**

Significant improvements have been made since the last inspection. The subject leader has ensured that the focus for development issues have been addressed, contributing to the overall effectiveness of teaching and learning. RE makes a considerable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons because they do 'fun' things like art and drama. Lessons are well-planned and delivered by teachers who have a sound understanding of the subject. Creative approaches were seen in all the lessons observed. In one lesson pupils shared a Pesach or Passover meal as part of their work on Judaism. In another, their experience of 'persecution' carefully engineered earlier in the day by the teacher, gave pupils a personal insight into the cause of Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' speech. Their reflective responses, "It helped me to remember that God made everyone equal," and, "We should respect one another," demonstrated their thinking. A good balance between learning about and learning from religion is achieved. Pupils have a growing knowledge of the Bible and teachings of Jesus. They talk confidently about the parables and why Jesus told the stories. Although not clearly defined, pupils' knowledge and understanding of Islam and Judaism is developing. "It's good to learn about how other people worship God," explained one pupil. "Things like do you know that Moslems pray on a mat and wash their hands and arms first?" Effective use has been made of diocesan support. Assessment strategies are now firmly established and used to inform planning. Pupil work is well-presented and standards are at least equal to those in other subject areas. The school recognises that pupil involvement in assessment is limited, which is a focus for further development.

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

The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have a clear Christian vision for the school. Although not always explicitly expressed, it is well-understood by staff and pupils who demonstrate Christian love, trust and respect in all their relationships. The school's mission statement, which pupils helped to formulate, and code of conduct are based on Christian values and principles. Since the last inspection, foundation governors have addressed the issue of church school evaluation. Although not

always easy to obtain, parental views have been noted and addressed. For example, the termly 'Link' leaflet now publicises school and church events. Governors have a clearer understanding of their role. They visit the school regularly, monitoring the curriculum and school day. Reports are used to inform, challenge and support the work of the school. Governors also act as willing helpers, supporting learning and accompanying educational visits, such as the recent theatre trip. Senior leaders recognise that further work is needed to extend the evaluation of the school as a church school which is an area for development. Links with the church are very strong and mutually supportive. The school contributes to the church magazine and displays of pupil work are kept in church. Members of the church community worship regularly with pupils and their families. Members of staff support the monthly family worship in church, and the school choir provides entertainment at church events such as the Christmas fair. The pupil voice is strong. Pupils are confident that their opinions are heard and valued. They are proud of their fund-raising achievements and the fact that playground equipment has been purchased at their suggestion. Parents are supportive of the work of the school. They are confident that their children are happy safe and nurtured within a distinctly Christian environment. They say that they are kept well-informed and that teachers are always friendly and approachable. Although parents value and attend school events, levels of engagement are not high. However, the school continuously seeks ways to increase and improve parental engagement. Effective use is made of a range of local partnerships which support and enhance opportunities for pupils.

SIAS report February 2013 Burnley St. Stephen's Church of England Primary School,  
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