

Benjamin Hargreaves C of E (Aided) Primary School

**Barnfield Street
Accrington,
Lancashire
BB5 2AQ**

Diocese:	Blackburn
Local authority:	Lancashire
Dates of inspection:	5 th December 2008
Date of last inspection:	January 2006
School's unique reference number:	119441
Headteacher:	Mrs Julie Nicol
Inspector's name and number:	Rev W Sloan (521)

School context

Benjamin Hargreaves C of E is a smaller than average primary school on the outskirts of Accrington. It serves an area of significant social deprivation. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. On entry to the school the majority of pupils have skills which are significantly below the national average. Approximately 20% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Benjamin Hargreaves C of E (Aided) Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

The school's Christian character permeates all aspects of school life. Its Christian principles of love and respect are actively promoted making a significant impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children are caring and responsible members of their community and have been inspired by the Christian teaching and ethos of their school.

Established strengths

- Highly effective leadership team that has a clear Christian vision in respect of the development of the school.
- High quality relationships throughout the school community which contribute to the exceptional care and guidance for all pupils.
- Quality acts of Collective Worship which have a positive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Mutually beneficial links between the school, church and local community.

Focus for development

- Refine the assessment procedures in religious education in order to ensure that all pupils are sufficiently challenged in the tasks which are set.
- Broaden the scope of the monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship.
- Involve pupils more in planning and leading acts of worship.

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

Christian values underpin every aspect of the life of the school and this is making a significant impact on learners. The quality of relationships is outstanding making all members of the school community feel valued and special. Everyone is aware of the Christian foundation of the school, and even the youngest children have an understanding of what that means. Pupils are proud of their school and speak enthusiastically about the work they do in religious education and the daily act of collective worship. As one pupil commented, "our school is a fun place to learn"; this is clearly based on the firm Christian foundations promoted by the staff and governors. Parents speak positively about the care their children receive. They also appreciate the way in which the school gives their children an understanding of different faiths and cultures.

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

Worship is central to the life of the school. Planning and organisation of Collective Worship by the Headteacher and the link governor are outstanding. Children are respectful and participate in an atmosphere of warmth and care. Prayer, silence and reflection is well used by the worship leader and these make a significant impact on pupils' spiritual development. Worship takes place daily, either as a whole school, key stage or class. All staff attend worship and provide good role models for pupils. Children know a range of prayers and learn these from an early age in school. Pupils of all faiths are integrated well and there are currently no requests for any children to be withdrawn from worship. Parents speak positively about attending Christmas, Easter, end of year and other services at St. Paul's Church. Strong links with the parish church ensure good understanding of Anglican traditions. Children say they enjoy all aspects of worship but they are not sufficiently involved in planning or leading Collective Worship. The school is particularly good at involving the entire school community at worship events - there is always high parent attendance at school Worship held in church. Foundation governors regularly attend worship both in school and at the parish church and take some part in the evaluation. The school does not as yet seek the views of pupils and parents when evaluating collective worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

Standards in religious education are in line with those in core subjects and achievement is good. Pupils' written work has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now at least as good as work in other areas. As they move through the school pupils develop a good understanding of the Christian faith and Anglican traditions. They recognise similarities and differences between Christianity and other world faiths, particularly Islam, Hinduism and Judaism. This is supported by visits to St Paul's church and visitors to the school. Most pupils, whatever their faith background, enjoy Religious Education and recognise its relevance to their own lives. They demonstrate a good understanding of values such as respect and forgiveness. Religious Education makes an excellent contribution to spiritual growth with learners talking readily about the part that God plays in their lives. This is reflected in the quality of the prayers that they write. In one lesson the pupils were able to reflect on 'what we do for others we do for Jesus' and that 'Jesus is with us all the time.' Teaching is good overall, with the Religious Education teacher having well developed subject knowledge. Effective use is made of artefacts, ICT and drama to make sure this subject "comes alive". An example of this is the "Christmas books" produced by older pupils. There are procedures in place for RE to be reviewed on a regular basis. This ensures pupils make good progress throughout the school. Current procedures for the assessment of RE do not give a complete picture of children's achievements with the result that not all pupils are sufficiently challenged in their thinking.

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

Leadership by the Headteacher is outstanding and supplemented by strong support from other managers. She has embedded a Christian ethos into all aspects of school work with a determination that every decision must be based on what will be best for the children concerned. The school's procedures for evaluating its effectiveness as a church school are at an early stage of development. Foundation governors, including the chair, give generously of their time and seek to ensure that the school's Christian ethos promotes every aspect of children's development and happiness, not only the academic perspectives. The school staff are extremely committed and seek to realise a Christian mission through being focussed on every single pupil's learning, personal development and emotional needs. There are good links with the local church communities, particularly the parish church through the contribution of volunteers and clergy. Parents are very pleased with the progress their children make and their personal development. The school is regularly over-subscribed.