

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Livesey Saint Francis' CE (Aided) Primary School

Cherry Tree Lane,
Cherry tree
Blackburn
BB2 5NX

Diocese: Blackburn

Local authority: Blackburn with Darwen

Dates of inspection: 14th January 2010

Date of last inspection: 2-3rd November 2006

School's unique reference number: 119423

Headteacher: Mrs S Thomas

Inspector's name and number: Mrs R Wall 548

School context

Livesey Saint Francis Church of England School has 201 pupils on roll. It is situated on the south-western side of Blackburn and 40% of children come from outside the locality and travel by car or bus. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The school is a popular choice with parents and is usually oversubscribed. The majority of pupils who attend are white British.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Christ Church as a Church of England school are good

There is a strong, distinctive Christian ethos based upon Christian values which has a significant impact on children's learning, achievements and personal well-being. Children's sensible behaviour, positive approaches to work and very good attitudes to learning clearly reflect Christian teachings. The school and church community work closely alongside each other to foster the all round development of each individual child, within a supportive Christian environment.

Established strengths

- The caring and supportive Christian ethos which underpins the work of the school
- The effective links with the Anglican church
- The dedication and enthusiasm of the school team who work well together and support each other
- The children's positive views of daily worship and RE

Focus for development

- To increase the level of formal involvement of foundation governors in the self-evaluation of church school distinctiveness, collective worship and RE
- To involve children in leading significant acts of worship
- To build on good practice in the planning and teaching of RE and ensure that high standards in RE are consistent across the school

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

The Christian foundation of the school is clearly evident within the school environment. The cross is the symbol on the school logo displayed in the entrance, on uniform sweatshirts and on all communications. Colourful crosses have been recently purchased to hang prominently in each classroom. The hall and classrooms have attractive displays, which illustrate aspects of Christianity and themes of religious education. The school has worked together to choose eight Christian values to focus on. These have been included in the revised mission statement and are on display in the school hall. These values are taken individually as a whole school focus theme for each week, reflecting their importance within the daily life of the school. There are opportunities for both formal and private prayer during each day. Personal development and well-being of the children is outstanding. The school places an important emphasis on the inclusion of all children, enabling them to achieve their full potential.

Children told me that they enjoy school and are happy. All relationships within the school are characterised by Christian love, care and respect of others. Staff are clearly happy and one teacher said that being part of this school has had a positive impact on his own spiritual journey. Children are well motivated and have positive attitudes to their learning. Their work and achievements are regularly celebrated with the school and parents, and children say that this makes them feel special. Children are encouraged to become responsible citizens by being given opportunities to be members of the school council and eco warriors. Both of these groups are clearly very effective in the life of the school. School council has been instrumental in deciding which charities to support, establishing a 'playground pals' initiative, gaining funding from 'Playground Partnerships' and involvement in the process of writing adverts and interviewing for teaching posts. Children are confident that they are listened to, that their ideas are taken seriously and that they have made a difference. They are developing a strong sense of community, and display a sensitive awareness of their duty of care towards each other in school and in the wider community. They are taught the need for respect and compassion for others by supporting a range of charities including: 'Friends of Mulanje Aids Orphans'. The school is proud of, and clearly benefits from, its close links with the St Francis Church. Services are held on special occasions either in church or school and many parents, regardless of faith background, attend and enjoy these. The majority of Year 6 children have chosen to be confirmed in church. The weekday 'Family Praise' church service is proving very popular with school and community.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is regarded as being central to the Christian character of the school. The issue raised at the last inspection has been addressed with a two year scheme now in place, covering a broad range of themes. The headteacher feels a flexible approach is vital to allow for responding to events such as the Haiti disaster. Worship observed within the inspection enhanced children's understanding of the Christian value of trust, chosen as the theme for the week. A fun and interactive 'Truth or Lie' game illustrated the idea of trust and was thoroughly enjoyed by children and staff. The children's singing was very good and signing used effectively to enhance the meaning of the words of the song. All members of the staff attend and join in enthusiastically. This sends a positive message to children about the importance attached to daily worship. Children listen attentively and their responses are relevant and thoughtful. They enjoy those occasions when they are able to take an active part. Worship in school is consistently and recognisably Christian but is sensitive to the beliefs of those of other faiths and none and takes care to ensure that worship provides for their spiritual and moral development. Children speak positively about worship regardless of their faith background. There is an effective balance between whole school worship and key stage worship. This enables staff to plan worship relevant to the needs, interests, ages and abilities of the children. The vicar leads worship in school on a regular basis and, with the chair of governors, the weekday family service in church. Their involvement in the life of the school helps to promote spirituality and Anglican traditions. A formal system of evaluating worship is now done by the coordinator, who also informally with the children.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

The school follows the Blackburn diocesan RE syllabus. Schemes of work reflect the school's Christian foundation at the same time as giving due weight to other faiths. The subject coordinator is knowledgeable and passionate about her subject. She is well respected by other teachers for the support and guidance she gives as they build on their own expertise. The coordinator has worked hard to address issues raised in the last inspection regarding the need for assessment of children's attainment. Advice and support given by the diocesan advisor is now being followed and the planning of RE has improved. Each class has a portfolio with photographs and examples of children's thoughts and work. The standard of these varies across the school but they show a broad range of creative activities in RE which enable children to learn effectively about, and from religion. This includes the Christianity themed week for which Children's evaluation showed that they had enjoyed the various activities including: the Joseph dance workshop, art and design technology projects, role-play and baking cakes. Trips have taken place during culture weeks to a local Hindu Mandir. Children from different faith groups willingly talk about their own faith and listen to the views of others with interest and respect, which enhances community cohesion. Various interactive display themes have been set up which give children the opportunity to reflect and respond to a statement or idea, by creating their own prayers or thoughts. RE is viewed by the school as an important curriculum area having the status of a core subject and funded as such. The

chair of governors has been actively supportive, in attending courses and liaising with the coordinator. Foundation governors are not as yet involved with the coordinator in monitoring of standards in RE, and this has been recognised as an area for development.

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

The leadership team and governors ensure the Christian character of the school is visibly displayed, featuring in school documentation and in other areas of school life. The headteacher, deputy and governors provide effective leadership and management, working in very close partnership to promote their Christian purpose and vision. They are fully supported by a united staff team. The partnership that exists between the school and the local church is a strength of the school. This enhances pastoral care, family values and community spirit. The headteacher and staff are readily accessible and parents appreciate this. The vast majority of parents made positive comments about the school, with many saying that they value the school as a church school. One parent commented that the school “*meets every requirement we could wish for. We feel privileged to have our children attend this school.*” The school is outward looking, relates well to the local community and supports those in need both in this country and abroad, in a way consistent with its Christian values. The school has a clear understanding of its future development needs and achieving the ‘Church School Distinctiveness Award’ is a whole school focus this year. Middle management courses have been organised for teachers’ professional development. The chair of governors and the vicar are highly valued by the school team and their contribution enriches the life of the school. New foundation governors have been recently appointed. They are not as yet fully involved in monitoring and evaluation of standards in church school distinctiveness, collective worship and RE.

SIAS report January 2010 Livesey Saint Francis’ C of E Primary School, Cherry Tree, Blackburn