

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Bispham Endowed (Voluntary Controlled) Church of England Primary School
Bispham Road
Blackpool
FY2 0HH

Diocese: Blackburn
Local authority: Blackpool
Date of inspection: 17th May 2010
Date of last inspection: 27th March 2007
School's unique reference number: 119411
Headteacher: Mrs Jo Hirst
Inspector's name and number: Mr Mike Graham (286)

School context

Bispham Endowed CE Primary School has 418 children on roll. It serves an economically and socially mixed urban area and although most children are local, an increasing number come from further afield. The vast majority of pupils are of white British heritage. The number of children eligible for free school meals is just below average. The percentage of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. There is a nursery on site.

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

Bispham Endowed has a distinctive Christian ethos. Christian values and attitudes form the foundation of school life and permeate every part of the curriculum. Caring and loving relationships in school demonstrate Christian values very effectively. The children are secure, happy and enthusiastic, largely because of the strong and inspiring leadership from the headteacher and her team.

Established strengths

- The Christian vision and inspiring leadership of the headteacher, supported well by all staff and governors
- The high quality and variety of worship
- The Christian family ethos within which each child is valued

Focus for development

- Review the Christian distinctiveness of the school and update the mission statement
- Develop ways in which the school's Christian character can enhance the children's understanding of cultural diversity at a national and global level

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

The school's Christian values have a strong impact on the children's personal development. The atmosphere in school is happy, calm and secure. The Year 6 monitors play key roles in helping the younger children and in supporting staff. The School Council and Eco Council play an important part in helping the children to evaluate different options and make decisions. Such responsibilities make invaluable contributions to their development, self-esteem and maturity. The children and all other members of the school family express eloquently and clearly understand the significance of Christian values. Their fund-raising ventures include the aptly named Good Samaritan Fund from which money is distributed to local, national and international projects. Community cohesion is developed in many other ways. Examples include the annual Arts Week, which focuses on cultures around the world through activities such as African drumming and Aboriginal art. The Christian ethos supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children very well. RE and worship make a significant contribution to the breadth and depth of their spiritual understanding. However, the school recognises that cultural development lacks

such breadth and depth. The successful efforts to encourage and develop openness, honesty and a constant willingness to listen to each other leads to excellent personal relationships. A Year 5 child comment that 'The teachers are happy' is significant in its confirmation of the positive family ethos. The school environment is used well to encourage spiritual development through bright and interactive displays, often with RE and worship as their theme. Notably there are worship areas and 'prayer and praise' boxes in each classroom. The care taken of the site is evident and uplifting, and there are carefully designed areas to 'Stop, Look, Reflect' in school that are much appreciated and well used by the children, staff and visitors. In the grounds the raised beds for flowers, fruit and vegetables provide scope for practical and active contemplation of God's creation.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The children are extremely positive about worship and value it highly. 'We worship God through music' said a Year 4 girl. When discussing prayer, a Year 5 boy commented, 'We are focused with our eyes closed...and we are talking to God'. The children appreciate the opportunities given to them to lead prayers and participate through role-play. Staff and children introduce and close worship by using statements of faith such as 'The Lord be with you' to which the whole school community responds. All teaching staff lead worship regularly along with the rector and they offer an excellent variety of activities that support children's spiritual development. The worship seen was impressive and was led by the headteacher with sensitivity, humour and great clarity. Role-play and good use of projected images enhanced the message, which centred on our aim in life as Christians to do our best and to 'try to be like Jesus'. It was dramatised by inventive use of newspaper titles. Quiet reflection and prayers for the sick, including the Rector, and a strong rendition of the school song were other highlights. The children and adults were captivated throughout, and the impact on the children was clear. The sincerity and relevance of worship ensures that both pupils and staff gain inspiration, are encouraged to grow spiritually and are personally affirmed. The shared leadership of this area of work leads to a variety in approach that enriches the worship experience. Formal and informal prayers are an integral part of school life.

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

The headteacher and governors promote a distinctive school vision based on Christian values with great enthusiasm and commitment. The rector is fully involved and all governors are supportive. The school does far more than simply teach Christian values; it ensures that they are part of the daily life of the school family. Almost all stakeholders understand the vision and all staff demonstrate the vital importance of living it. Plans for next year include a review of the school's Christian mission. Parents, carers and children are clear and articulate when describing the values of their school. The headteacher's own Christian faith illuminates all aspects of her leadership. The foundation governors, the rector and the acting chair support her strongly and effectively. The acting chair of governors is delighted that the school's Christian witness includes 'loving and looking after one another'. A foundation governor commented 'We have a headteacher who is able to cascade love to all'. Wholehearted support for in-service training and teamwork and delegation encourages potential church school leaders. Parents and carers are delighted with the school, and are given regular and varied opportunities for feedback. Comments from parents and carers included, 'He comes home singing songs about Jesus', 'She (the headteacher) knows all the children by name. I don't know how she does it!' and simply, 'It's fantastic!'