



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Bleasdale Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Bleasdale
Preston
PR3 1UY

Diocese: Blackburn

Local authority: Lancashire

Date of inspection: 2nd October 2014

Date of last inspection: 11th September 2008

School's unique reference number: 119520

Headteacher: Mr I. Cookson

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Kathryn Pym 726

School context

Bleasdale Church of England Primary School is situated on the Bleasdale Estate in the heart of the Trough of Bowland. The school is situated within a short walk from St Eadmer's Church. There are currently thirteen children on roll, which is much lower than the last inspection. The school is part of a collaboration with another small school. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2011.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bleasdale as a Church of England School are good

- The close relationships that are founded on Christian values and embrace the whole community.
- The learning environment and close working relationship with St Eadmer's church, which provide opportunities for the children to develop spiritually.
- The quality of provision for religious education (RE) and collective worship, which enable the children to understand Anglican traditions and explore spiritual questions.

Areas to improve

- Revise the school mission statement with the whole school community.
- Identify the core values which lie at the heart of the school and make these explicit in the daily life of the school.
- Ensure that the children's knowledge and understanding of world faiths and Christianity around the world is extended.

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

The Christian character of the school makes a good impact on the academic achievement and the progress that the children make across the curriculum. Current school analysis shows that

the progress that the children are making with their learning is improving across the curriculum, due to raised expectations and more rigorous accountability. The children's well-being and personal developments are central to the life of the school. This truly is a family school. One parent described it as a 'loving and caring school.' The children enjoy their school life and as a consequence attendance is excellent. Christian values are implicit to all aspects of school life, but strides now need to be taken to make these more explicit. The children demonstrate excellent knowledge of Bible stories. The children value their faith and can talk about what they believe. One child explained that her favourite Bible story was Easter as 'When Jesus died he came back to us. He told us that he would always be in our hearts through the Holy Spirit.' The school uses every opportunity to develop the children's spirituality. The learning environment is used to celebrate the wonders of creation, such as the location of the worship area looking out onto the idyllic setting. The outside worship area is certainly a special place for the children. The school motto, 'A small school with high hopes' was explained by one child; 'The hope on our school badge is the hope that the Holy Spirit stays in their hearts.' The positive relationships in the school are a tremendous strength. The school has identified that further work needs to be done with the children with regards to developing an understanding and awareness of world faiths and Christianity as a global world faith. The children demonstrate respect for diverse communities and have been given the opportunity to meet people from different communities. The RE and in particular the 'Big Questions' make a significant contribution to Christian character of the school and the children's spiritual development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship engages and inspires the children and is valued by all the whole school community. It is at the heart of the school and is used to promote the Christian distinctiveness of the school. It celebrates the unique family nature of the school with one child explaining that 'it reminds us every day that God is always on our side.' Worship enables the children to gain a good understanding of Anglican traditions and it is varied in approach. The children are given many opportunities to pray, reflect, praise and listen. Worship is planned and organised. Planning focuses on Christian values as well as significant points in the liturgical calendar. Worship regularly takes place in St Eadmer's church. Through working with the incumbent, the children have some understanding of St Eadmer, even though little has been recorded about his life. Exploration of faith with the incumbent has also provided the children with sound understanding of the Trinity, which they are able to articulate. All of the children attend special school Sunday services, such as Harvest. Children engage with all aspects of worship and their singing is particularly strong. Children play a part in leading some acts of worship, but this is an area that the children are keen to expand on, along with planning their own services more regularly. Time for evaluation is valued by the children and this is used to inform future planning. Following a time of looking at values for life, explicit Gospel values will now be used as a central focus, along with the revision of the school mission statement. A clear strength of worship is the involvement of the incumbent and the close relationship with the parish and with other churches and schools in the Fellside Team. Joint services and opportunities to worship together enrich the spiritual lives of all of the children and the school community.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The standards attained in RE throughout the school are in line with national expectations and in other subjects in the school. Monitoring strategies are rigorous and have resulted in raised standards for all learners across the curriculum. Assessment strategies for RE are effective and inform planning and RE developments. Due to very small numbers, moderating takes place with the sister school. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is outstanding and is taught by a specialist throughout the school. Lessons are of a high standard and demonstrate good subject knowledge, and creativity. The children thoroughly enjoy RE. They value it and know that they are expected to work hard.

They feel challenged in particular with the 'Big Questions' which they explore on a regular basis. The children are proud of their RE work and demonstrate excellent understanding of Bible stories. The diocesan scheme of work is taught over a four year programme. Learning is enhanced through visits to places of worship, such as an orthodox synagogue. The subject is led very well and as a consequence it is given a high profile in the school. Resources are shared with the partner school and therefore offer a varied experience for the children. The use of chatterboxes in Key Stage 1 is particularly effective and certainly engages the children and provides opportunities for them to explore their understanding further. In Key Stage 2 the children were observed discussing and researching people who have been called by God. When discussing the life of Tyndale, one child explained 'If the Bible was just in Latin, we would only be able to listen to it in church on Sunday.' Lessons are extended through homework challenges that are set each week. Improvements have been made in the children's understanding of world faiths since the last inspection. Further steps have been rightly identified to extend this and to include teaching about the Christian church world-wide.

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

The headteacher and governors of the school promote a distinctive school vision based on Christian values with enthusiasm. The headteacher's Christian faith is evident in all he does. Parents, staff and children are clear of the Christian foundations of the school and see that as the cornerstone of the school. Parental engagement is a strength and the parents speak very highly of the school. In a recent questionnaire, one hundred percent of parents agreed that the Christian ethos is evident in all aspects of school life. The well-being of pupils is given the highest priority, which is evident in all aspects of the school life, but notably in RE and collective worship. Significant improvements have been made to the overall quality of provision over the past twelve months and this is clearly evident in the outcomes for learners and the high expectations for all. Following training and intensive support from the diocese, the governors are involved in an effective programme of self-evaluation and school improvement and they demonstrate a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development with regards to the Christian distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school. However, they have now recognised the need to review the school mission statement as a whole community and promote the Christian values that are implicit throughout the school explicitly. They provide both challenge and support to the head teacher. Succession planning is a key consideration during any recruitment processes and the head teacher is committed to the professional development of all of the staff. This is particularly evident in RE and collective worship. Pupil voice in school is strong and the children feel listened to and valued. Links with the church are mutually beneficial and both church and school work in partnership to serve families. The relationship with the incumbent is particularly strong resulting in the children and families seeing his pastoral support as part of the everyday life of their Church of England Primary School.

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