



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Barkisland Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Scammonden Rd
Barkisland
Halifax
West Yorkshire
HX4 0BD

Diocese: Wakefield

Local authority: Calderdale
Dates of inspection: 6th May 2008
Date of last inspection: 27th & 28th September 2004
School's unique reference number: 107552
Headteacher: Mrs Sue Sutton
Inspector's name and number: Roger Highton (No. 336)

School context

Barkisland is a small village situated on the hills south west of Halifax. The school has 142 pupils aged 4-11 years. The school is presently having an extension built to house the infant department. It serves a community that has a diverse socio-economic profile but little cultural or ethnic diversity. Pupils' attainment at KS1 and KS2 are above the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Barkisland CE Voluntary Aided school are outstanding

The pupils of this school have a very positive sense of self. Their calmness and empathy are nurtured through outstanding social, moral and spiritual provision. There is a distinctly Christian vision maintained by staff, governors and members of the local church. Religious education has an outstanding impact on the effectiveness of this school as a church school.

Established strengths

- The impact RE has on the distinctiveness of this school as a church school
- The care and thoughtfulness pupils show each other
- The Christian leadership based on a strong relationship between school and church

Focus for development

- To increase the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship
- To encourage clergy from other denominations to lead worship in school
- To increase teacher confidence in the assessment of religious education

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

This is an overtly Christian school. The mission statement and school aims, presented in the school prospectus, are clearly based on Christian principles and beliefs. The school has invested much time and resources in creating a welcoming and calm Christian environment. This can be seen in the high quality Christian displays throughout the school. Policies uphold

Christian principles and include sections that state how each document supports the Christian aims of the school. These Christian principles directly impact on the quality of relationships within the school community. The staff are open and approachable and pupils think all the adults are happy working in their school. The pupils are very aware of themselves and others. When a pupil contributes to a group discussion, they often refer to what a previous pupil has said. The pupils are very clear of what makes their school a good church school. They are very comfortable talking about spiritual matters and all pupils feel safe. The care pupils show each other in the playground is exceptional. Adults set a good model of behaviour for the pupils who appreciate the support, hard work and enjoyment adults bring to the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is an important part of the school day. Every teacher leads acts of worship and all staff attend once a week. The headteacher ensures that collective worship is well planned and resourced. A calm and reflective atmosphere is created using music, candles and an "Everyone Matters" banner made by the children. Pupils enter the hall in absolute silence. When the act of worship has a particularly Anglican focus the hall is set out like the local church. Pupils are happy to make contributions to collective worship and enjoy responding to humorous comments. School services at the local church are very well attended by parents and a considerable number attend the monthly family service. Pupils pray three times a day and believe this helps them deal with any worries or concerns they have. A member of the local church (and a Foundation Governor) leads a Tea Time club which also includes prayers and the singing of hymns. Governor meetings always start with a prayer and governors do attend some acts of worship but the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship could be improved. There are presently no regular contributions to worship from other denominations.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Attainment in this subject is broadly in line with the higher than average standards achieved in other core subjects. The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Pupils know that religious education is important because of the teachers' enthusiasm and hard work in planning for the lessons. Both lessons observed during the inspection were outstanding. The infant lesson, based on the 4th day of the Christian creation story, instilled such awe and wonder as the pupils were able to meet an 8 day old foal and other young farm animals. The Y6 lesson was equally impressive and included pupils creating a "creed" for their own school. The process enabled all pupils to be valued and they were able to make a very comprehensive list of why their school was special. Pupils' progress and attainment is carefully tracked in all classes and the subject leader carries out her monitoring duties well. Some staff may be under assessing pupils so some staff training to moderate teacher assessments would be beneficial. Religious education is a priority in this year's school development plan and receives a substantial annual budget.

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

When the headteacher arrived at this school (in 1996) it had serious weaknesses. She has led the school through a difficult period to a position where the whole community is now proud of Barkisland VA Primary school. Her Christian vision is integral to the way she works in school. One adult commented that the headteacher, "just meets people as they are". Outstanding relationships, throughout the school community, have been nurtured with the support of the senior leadership team, governors and local church. Barkisland is an outstanding example of a school and church working together. Three members of the governing body are members of the Parochial Church Council and the new Vicar regularly visits the school to deliver worship and support the staff. Governors can readily give examples of when the school's church status has affected decisions made for pupils. The headteacher makes regular contributions to the parish magazine and the school helps with its duplication and dissemination. Christian leadership seems totally natural to this school.