



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Batley Parish Church of England Voluntary Aided JI and Nursery School**

Stocks Lane  
Batley  
WF17 8PA

#### **Diocese: Wakefield**

Local authority: Kirklees

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> November 2007

Date of last inspection: December 2003

School's unique reference number: 107736

Headteacher: Mr Ian Richardson

Inspector's name and number: Mr R D Masterton No. 483

#### **School context**

Batley Parish School serves the old industrial town of Batley in a multiracial area of severe social deprivation. 31% of children are from ethnic minorities and 14% claim free school meals. The school is, nevertheless, very over-subscribed. It is adjacent to the parish church.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Batley Parish CE (A) JI & Nursery School as a Church of England school are outstanding**

Batley Parish School provides an exceptional and fully inclusive education for its pupils with a powerful Christian ethos. It is a community where not just children but everyone learns. Such is the quality of the education provided, that provision cannot satisfy the demand from all local parents who would like their children to attend. The school always seeks to improve and can do so by building community links and crowning pupils' achievement with greater understanding and confidence to express difficult ideas and truths.

#### **Established strengths**

- The educational achievement and outstanding personal development of children who are caring, thoughtful, well behaved and respectful members of their school community.
- The inspirational leadership of the head teacher that has trained, guided and empowered staff to make Batley Parish School highly effective and fully inclusive; a school sought after by parents and staff for the way that it inspires personal growth and development.
- The quality of the work of foundation governors and the links between the work of the school and that of the parish church.

#### **Focus for development**

- Develop greater links with the Muslim worshiping community in the Batley district in order to enrich children's experience and to build further inclusion.
- Develop children's ability to better formulate and express their intellectual understanding of religious symbolism, ideas, ideals and ultimate truths.
- Extend the interpretation of school aims by children and adults working together to secure the best possible education experience for everyone in this Christian-inspired community.

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

The Christian mission of this school is exceptionally well developed. There is a shared understanding and interpretation by everyone, especially the children who all contribute to deciding what this means in practice in their classes. The educational provision is finely adjusted to each child's needs and achievement is outstanding. The same is true for children's personal development: they are confident, articulate, thoughtful and caring whose demeanour and attitudes

have been shaped by their school. The school is very successful in educating some children who have severe social and behavioural problems. Relationships in the school are outstanding but particularly those between children themselves which transcend and overcome any difficulties that might arise through differences of behaviour, ethnicity and faith. An ethos of Christian inspired care and purposeful learning pervades the school. It is evident in the way the school mission and character is represented in classrooms and in the efforts made to set up spaces for reflection in the uninspiring setting of the school grounds. But most evident is the testimony of children themselves whose behaviour, approach to learning, response to the needs of others and tangible mutual respect make Batley Parish School such a special and valued community. The children know and understand that what they are asked to do stems directly from the beliefs and philosophy that underpin their school.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

School managers and governors give the highest possible priority to providing collective worship. It is well planned by the head teacher, the parish priest and foundation governors and is inspiring. Collective worship is varied, presented with great flair, intellectually challenging (for adults as well as children), very moving and draws strength from the quality of creative participation by children themselves. Children volunteer to join a worship group that works with the head teacher to enrich acts of collective worship held both in school and in the church. Led by the head teacher and with regular contributions from local clergy, worship has built the confidence of children to make spontaneous contributions of their ideas and feelings in front of the whole school. Children contribute increasingly to parish worship. They connect well the themes of their worship with the religious education teaching they receive. Collective worship has a very high impact on children who recall easily services they have attended and the messages they contained. They view collective worship as a natural expression of their growing understanding linked to their learning. An increasing number of parents join a special act of collective worship each week and many attend festival occasions held in the church. Worship follows the Anglican calendar and traditions and is fully inclusive with parents and children from other faith backgrounds very happy to participate.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

Religious education is seen as of vital importance in this school. The head teacher has introduced an exceptionally detailed and comprehensive scheme of work based on the diocesan scheme that governors have authorised. This planning has empowered class teachers to undertake religious education with the children they know well and the quality of teaching and learning has been rapidly improved. There are fully developed systems for evaluating and recording the standards reached by pupils and these confirm that their work in religious education matches the high standards and achievement that they demonstrate in core subjects. Teaching offers children a demanding intellectual challenge. They learn in depth about many aspects of different faiths, Bible events and religious practice. The significance of what they have learned is always explored. High standards of written work are demanded and realised. Children's writing, expressing their thoughts and composing their prayers, reaches high standards and can be very moving, reflecting their growing understanding of human responsibilities and relationships. Children's comprehension moves beyond a simple recall of what they have covered and extends to a personal enquiry into the truths and significance of what they have learned.

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

The head teacher provides outstanding and inspirational leadership that touches all members of the school community and which nurtures, informs and empowers everyone's work. In addition there is a remarkable commitment of time and talents by foundation governors who work voluntarily in school. In so doing they not only monitor and review provision but identify with the whole process of school improvement. There is an intrinsic and engrained approach to continually interpreting the Christian mission of the school as a means of constructing the best education possible for children. This results in a cohesion of purpose by all school staff and is reinforced by rigorous process of gathering review evidence from children, governors, parents, volunteers and staff. It reveals where improvement is needed such as the need for greater shared understanding of traditions and worship in the local Muslim community. There is a very strong relationship with the parish church, its staff, its congregation and its worship with both institutions mutually supporting, confirming and expressing their shared vision and commitment.