

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Brockholes Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior and Infant School

Brockholes Lane
Brockholes
Holmfirth
HD9 7EB

Diocese: Wakefield

Local authority: Kirklees
Dates of inspection: 4th June 2008
Date of last inspection: Jan 2005
School's unique reference number: 107713
Headteacher: Gill Roberts
Inspector's name and number: Alan Thornsby 137

School context

Brockholes is a smaller than average sized primary school in which most pupils are White British. The numbers of pupils receiving free school meals is well below average whilst those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above the national average. The school has gained the Active Mark 2007 and Quality Assurance Awards.

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

Children learn in a safe and secure learning environment. The Christian values of love respect and compassion are seen in action in the everyday life of the school. This results in each child being seen as an individual who is given care, challenge and support to achieve academically and personally.

Established strengths

- The commitment, vision and role model of the headteacher to the values of the school
- The welcoming atmosphere founded on care, support and guidance for all
- The commitment to both the academic and spiritual development of each individual child

Focus for development

- To involve the governing body in the formal monitoring and evaluation of collective worship
- To involve pupils in planning and leading worship

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

Christian love, respect and compassion underpin the ethos and practice of this school. This results in a warm, welcoming environment in which pupils feel safe and secure because of the strength of relationships in the school. There is constant reference from everyone in school to 'treat everyone as you would like them to treat you'. Staff have worked tirelessly to create a revised curriculum that meets the needs of all learners. This includes the inclusion of thinking skills that allow pupils to develop and understand different aspects of problem solving. Staff have high expectations for behaviour and achievement. This ensures that all pupils feel valued and are given the support they need to achieve their potential. The whole school community has a sensitive approach to supporting each other in times of difficulty. Pupils enjoy their learning because 'teachers make all our lessons fun'. Children care for each other in class and in the playground, because 'here we are kind and help each other'. This is well illustrated by the 'Befrienders', Year six pupils who ensure everyone is happy in the playground and also solve minor disputes. Pupils are very aware of the benefits of rewards and sanction systems, some of which they took an initiative in developing. The

spiritual awareness of pupils is outstanding because of the way the school makes planned use of the huge variety of outdoor areas the school has within its grounds. Music and art are also used very effectively to make links between learning and spirituality. The local tradition of brass bands is being securely established in school. This is a further example of how the school offers pupils a wide range of opportunities for challenge and success. Children are well prepared for future life in a multi cultural society because of the focus on cultural diversity that includes links with a school in Gambia, French and Spanish teaching and the creation of a cultural garden.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is central to the life of the school, both introducing and reinforcing the school ethos. The well-planned cycle of themes has been revised for the new academic year in order to fully meet the needs of pupils. Ongoing informal assessment by staff, pupils, parents and foundation governors has identified some areas for development, such as greater pupil involvement and inviting parents to join worship. Pupils understand the relevance of worship because it is linked to their own experiences. For example, the idea of God's family was developed through exploring belonging to a family unit then a larger school family. Pupils explain worship as an opportunity 'to explain about the world and teach us what is right and wrong'. Some pupils have a good knowledge of Christian festivals and symbols, recognising the symbolism of the lighted candle that is lit and extinguished by a pupil to mark the beginning and end of worship. Pupils gain a wide experience of worship through the range of formats and leaders. These include the vicar, the Methodist minister and foundation governor. The celebration of festivals such as Chinese New Year and Divali gives pupils an awareness of other faiths. Pupils create a reverent atmosphere for worship with their appropriate behaviour. They clearly enjoy participation in singing, in role-play and helping with organising the hall. The high profile of prayer in school is seen in the opportunities pupils have for writing and sharing prayers in class prayer folders. Pupils have the opportunity for prayer or reflection throughout the day by using special areas in each classroom. They explain the benefits of these by saying 'if you are wound up or angry you can sit quietly and think and then calm down'. Every child has the opportunity to read a prayer in whole school worship. Children enjoy being part of a wider worshipping community by using the church for festival services.

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

Christian love in action is seen in the passionate commitment of the headteacher in creating a united school community that is an active part of the local village community. An example of this is the strong and fruitful links with local residents who help maintain the children's garden in return for the siting of a community compost area. Within the school the headteacher is well supported by an effective leadership team and governing body. Individual governors are linked with each class to keep them informed of the policy and practice of the school. Foundation governors have a good understanding of their role. They are committed to regularly evaluating church school distinctiveness. This is a clear indicator of the good capacity for the future development of the school. The whole community is involved in decision-making processes, such as the creation of the vision statement. This reinforces commitment to shared ownership. The staff team are united in their determination to provide the best learning opportunities for all pupils and their efforts are recognised by parents and governors. Parents enjoy the open door policy of the school and the knowledge that issues are dealt with promptly and fairly. They are well informed of events in school through regular electronic information letters. The 'AD club' (a Christian activity club) extends the links between school and church.