



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### Elland Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior, Infant and Nursery School

Westgate

Elland

HX5 0BB

**Diocese: Wakefield**

LA: Calderdale

Dates of inspection: 26<sup>th</sup> March 2007.

Date of last inspection: April 22-24<sup>th</sup> 2002.

URN: 107550

Headteacher: Mrs. E. McGowan.

SIAS Inspector : Mrs. L. Alvy NS 170

#### School context

Elland Junior and Infant School is a smaller than average primary school. The school is situated in the centre of Elland. Most pupils come from the immediate area which is socially and economically challenging. Almost all pupils speak English as their first language. The school has had four headteachers in the past two and a half years as well as other significant difficulties in staffing. This has resulted in an unsettled period of time since the last inspection. The school has been awarded the Artsmark (Silver), the Active Mark and Investors in People.

#### Summary Judgement

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Elland as a Church of England school is good. A strong Christian tradition is at the heart of the school with its guiding principle of care and support within a living church family.

#### Established strengths

- Strong teamwork and solid relationships that provide a welcoming and secure environment for children, parents and carers.
- The effective partnership with the local parish churches.
- The good support for children's spiritual and moral development fostered by the strong Christian ethos of the school.

#### Focus for development

In partnership with governors and in particular foundation governors:-

- Re-visit planning for Collective Worship to ensure recording and evaluation is more rigorous and focussed on the impact on learners.
- Raise standards in religious education by using assessment information effectively to guide teacher's planning and ensure that all pupils make the expected progress.
- Use self-evaluation to celebrate success and strengthen the governors' role in monitoring and evaluating church school improvement.

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

The school is strongly committed to the nurture and care of its pupils promoted through clear Christian principles and a strong Christian team. Children develop a real sense of their own worth because self-esteem is fostered effectively. Trust in adults to support them, particularly when they are most vulnerable, is implicit. There is a commitment to forgiveness and a new start and this is a key feature in supporting the very good behaviour seen in the school. Children enjoy school and talk enthusiastically about their role as school councillors, the part they take in supporting work on good behaviour and their help for others. 'Our kindness tree' illustrated very effectively the powerful message of Christian values and spiritual experience fostered by the school and its partner churches. Recent surveys have demonstrated the increasing support and satisfaction of parents with the school. A group of parents were high in their praise for the school particularly the inclusion of children with special needs. A parent provided an apt description of the importance of the school's 'big family approach to religion' and how children learnt a lot from it. Opportunities to join clubs, to take part in residential visits, fund raising events, to sing, and to perform all give a compelling picture of how the school enriches the life of their children.

**The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.**

Daily Collective Worship is important in the life of the school because it provides an affirming and uplifting experience for children, staff and visitors. Children, from the youngest to the oldest clearly enjoy the thoughtfully planned opportunities to listen, sing, reflect and pray. Their behaviour is often exemplary and their eagerness to contribute evident in joyful singing and swift response to talk about God. A strong partnership with the local Vicar provides additional opportunities to explore Anglican faith and practice. Children develop a natural and inherent spirituality that is also evident in their display of prayers and in their interest in taking part in church worship such as Ash Wednesday and Lent groups. Foundation Governors are frequent and welcome visitors to worship both in school and church. Their role, alongside staff and pupils in its evaluation is under-developed although a current review has raised the profile of this important aspect of the school's Christian fellowship.

**Religious Education is satisfactory overall.**

Standards in religious education are broadly satisfactory and most pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils' attitudes are good. They listen well to their teachers and to each other and give thoughtful responses helped by teacher's probing questions. This helps them to recap on prior learning effectively. In work seen in both Year 2 and Year 6 planning shows clear learning objectives and marking used consistently to challenge thinking. By Year 6 pupils are beginning to make links between different religions and many have a sound recall of key facts and figures of events during Holy Week for instance. Whilst planning provides work to support pupils' ability to reflect and analyse on religion it is not rigorously assessed to raise achievement and expand thinking sufficiently. Subsequently standards are lower than would be normally expected by the end of Year 6 in this aspect. The newly appointed headteacher is currently supporting the subject manager in reviewing the use of assessment to track pupils' progress across the school. An action plan is in place to raise standards and achievement further.

**The leadership and management of the school as a church school are good.**

Recent events in the school's turbulent past have impacted on academic standards and achievement including religious education. But the close partnership between the parish churches and the school has remained constant. Foundation Governors have played an active part in this close partnership and alongside staff and other governors there is a strong team of caring, Christian people. Leading them is a compassionate but highly motivated headteacher with the drive and expertise to move the school forward. Staff, senior managers and governors are well placed to raise standards and progress in RE. The 'open door' policy has increased parental confidence in the school and they value the support of a welcoming Christian community that embraces individuality and difference.