



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### Lower Peover Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

The Cobbles  
Lower Peover  
Knutsford  
WA16 9PZ

#### Diocese: Chester

Local authority: Cheshire West and Chester  
Date of inspection: 21 June 2013  
Date of last inspection: 14 July 2008  
School's unique reference number: 111337  
Headteacher: Mrs Sharon Dean  
Inspector's name and number: Ian Newton 273

#### School context

This is a one form entry primary school which serves the village and surrounding rural area but also attracts children from Knutsford and parts of Northwich. It is regularly oversubscribed. The number of children entitled to free school meals is well below average, and whilst the number of children with special educational needs and disabilities is slightly below average, those with a statement of special educational needs is increasing.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Lower Peover Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

Lower Peover is a school which is firmly rooted in the Christian faith. It is a place where children grow not only academically, but spiritually, socially, morally and with a developing understanding of other cultures. It is a place where all children can achieve, whatever their level of ability because of the care and support given by staff, parents and the community at large. Children's good relationships with one another and outstanding behaviour contribute to well-rounded citizens emerging from this school.

#### Established strengths

- Christian values which permeate all aspects of school life.
- Outstanding relationships at all levels in the school community which are based on trust and respect.
- Excellent relationships with the incumbent and parish.
- The imaginative ways in which carefully selected quotations enable the Bible to speak to children so meaningfully.

#### Focus for development

- To involve the collective worship council in planning and leading acts of collective worship.
- To support work on community cohesion, establish links with schools in other settings.

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

Lower Peover is a popular school. Parents choose it for a mixture of reasons, some because it is their local school, others are influenced by the Christian values it instils in its pupils, which underpin all that this school does. Both parents and governors spoke of the warm feeling that this school engenders. Children show care for one another, being very accepting of those with disabilities or suffering from illness and those from other ethnic groups. They are tolerant, forgiving, display good manners and show respect for one another. This is a school in which children achieve high standards and make good progress as evidenced through end of Key Stage tests and assessments and confirmed by the recent OFSTED inspection. There is an increasing number of children with statements of special educational needs. The school's values impact on the level of support provided and excellence for all is the aim whatever the level of ability of the individual child. Staff know children and their families well and are adept at identifying barriers to learning and overcoming them. Children like school and there are high expectations with regard to attendance and punctuality, levels of which are above average. However, the caring nature of the school and the good relationships with parents means that effective support strategies exist and are implemented for those families that need it. Behaviour and relationships are outstanding and are fundamental to the ethos of the school. Children spoke of issues being dealt with speedily and with fairness. They are clear about the school's expectations, exhibiting courtesy, consideration and respect to all with whom they come into contact, in the school setting and beyond. One parent stated that the Christian principles the school instilled in children stayed with them as they progressed through life and was a firm foundation for them. They are aware of problems and opportunities available to those who live in other parts of the world particularly encouraged through a link with a school in South Africa that has recently ended. Children learn about how people of other faiths worship and they support a range of charitable causes locally, nationally and internationally. Forming another link with a school in a contrasting community would help keep children's awareness alive. This school manages to weave a Biblical quotation into almost every display of children's work ranging from the display in the school foyer which has a summary of the mission statement and a quote from Colossians, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord," to Biblical quotes linked with art work, design technology and internet safety. It is to be commended for the imaginative ways in which it has sought to enable the Bible to speak to children so meaningfully. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good as evidenced by the high quality displays which include Christian values, parables, crosses made by the children and prayers written by them.

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

Collective worship is central to the life of the school. The recently reviewed collective worship policy is very comprehensive and written in very user friendly language. It has a strong Christian emphasis but recognises the needs of other groups in the community. Children enjoy collective worship. They like the idea of the school gathering together as a community and having opportunities to reflect and sing and pray. One child said it made them feel part of God's family and another that the candle reminded him that Jesus is with us. A range of staff and the incumbent are involved in leading collective worship and children said they liked the variety of different worship leaders. Collective worship is well planned and effectively evaluated. A Christian value is chosen as the focus for each week and this is developed through a mix of whole school and key stage acts of worship. A member of staff led the act of worship that was observed, and took the theme of "Changes." Children were fully engaged and showed impeccable behaviour. There was a good mix of video clips, a story, hymn and prayers. The school's use of linking suitable Biblical quotes extended to this activity also. On a monthly basis on a school day, and on several Sundays during the year, collective worship is held in the parish church. This is well supported by families and several parents commented on the positive links between the school and the church. Both parents and children were especially complimentary about the role of the incumbent and the imaginative ways that she has developed worship with the school. Children are familiar with aspects of Anglican practice such as prayers, greetings and responses and symbols and artefacts. They

are also familiar with some of the sacraments, baptism and the Eucharist for example and know about the major festivals in the liturgical year. Both through collective worship and religious education, children are introduced to the concept of the Trinity through poetry, drama and using techniques such as hot seating. One of the outcomes of some teachers participating in the Christian Leadership course organised by local diocesan boards of education is the formation of a Collective Worship Council made up of pupils. They have discussed a range of issues including what constitutes collective worship, the Christian values underpinning school life, the distinctiveness of the church school and conducted a faith walk around school. They have not yet been involved in planning and leading collective worship. An issue from the previous inspection related to the development of planning and evaluation of collective worship has been fully met.

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

Religious Education (RE) is a cornerstone of this school's Christian foundation. It is led and managed at a very high standard. RE has a very distinctive place in school life and this is reflected in the school's RE policy document. The importance of RE is emphasised by the school holding an annual RE week and the children having special hard backed books in which to do their work. Comprehensive planning is undertaken using the Chester Diocesan Guidelines. In addition, children's literacy targets are embedded into presentation and marking, both being of an exceptionally high standard. Formal recording of assessments is undertaken using the "I can" statements and these follow the child to the next class. Regular moderation of children's RE work is undertaken enabling senior leaders and governors to monitor standards. Teachers make RE a very interesting topic for children to study, drawing heavily on art, drama and literacy. Creative use of ICT is a strength. The RE lesson observed was with a class in Key Stage One. Planning was very thorough and tasks well differentiated with additional support for those children requiring it. Children had previously learned about Moses' life and were able to build on this. They focussed on the plagues of Egypt and some of the qualities that Moses possessed. A range of video clips, story, writing and singing were employed. Children enjoyed good relationships, were focussed on their tasks and contributed positively to this good lesson. Several teachers are well qualified in this subject to degree level, and this enables them to provide support to other teachers if required. An issue from the previous inspection related to monitoring the effectiveness of assessment strategies in RE. This has been fully met with the use of the "I can" assessment statements, moderation of children's work, applying literacy targets to marking in RE and incorporating assessment opportunities into teachers' planning. Excellence in RE has been recognised with the school being awarded the RE Quality Mark at Gold standard. The school day following the inspection some children were to give a presentation to the All Party Group on Religious Education at the Palace of Westminster, a further recognition of what the school achieves in this area of school life.

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

The head teacher provides outstanding direction based on her personal Christian conviction and the values that underpin it. The school's policy of appointing teachers with a Christian faith strengthens its denominational nature. All in the school community are aware of what the school stands for, with parents and governors strongly supporting the head's leadership. The review of the school's mission statement and aims and objectives involved all key stakeholders. There is a strong culture of "what you believe impacts on what you do." When children were asked to consider the values that they wanted in the revised statement, some of them devised a presentation which they showed to the governing body. A genuine open door policy exists at this school with parents feeling that they are able to approach class teachers or senior staff if an issue arises and they are confident of a speedy resolution. Governors know the school well. Some are in school at least weekly, and some more frequently than that. They are fully involved in self evaluation, review and development planning. Strengthening their knowledge of the school, individual governors are linked with particular aspects of school life and regular meetings are held between the relevant governor and member of staff. In relation to the denominational aspects, the incumbent recently led a

learning walk around the school for governors, enabling them to see for themselves the quality of experience that the school provides. A new website, which has had strong governor involvement and support, has recently been launched. This too, reflects the strong Christian foundation of the school. The school fully meets its obligations in terms of collective worship and RE. Strong links with the parish, parents and other local schools exist. School and parish mutually support events and the parent body raises substantial sums to support the school's efforts as well as organising social events. Succession planning is very well developed at all levels in this school. Newly qualified teachers shadow another member of staff to gain experience of curriculum management, and at all levels encouragement to take on greater responsibilities is given to those who feel that they want that challenge. Opportunities to attend courses organised by the diocese and local authority are available to staff and governors, with some teachers having participated in the Christian leadership course to develop their Christian vision and leadership skills.

SIAMS report June 2013 Lower Peover CE Primary School, Knutsford, WA16 9PZ