

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Prestbury Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Bollin Grove
Prestbury
Macclesfield
Cheshire
SK10 4JJ

Diocese: Chester

Local authority: Cheshire East
Dates of inspection: 8th October 2012
Date of last inspection: 12th July 2007
School's unique reference number: 111325
Headteacher: Mr David Capener
Inspector's name and number: Mrs Ruth Wall 548

School Context

Prestbury Church of England School is a large village school. Most children are of white British heritage, with few children from ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of children entitled to free school meals is below the national average as is the number of children with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities. The school holds the inclusion quality mark and the international school award.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Prestbury as a Church of England school is outstanding

Prestbury school has been successful in establishing a clear Christian vision and developing a distinctive Christian character. There is strong and committed leadership from the headteacher and excellent support from the governing body and staff. Links with St Peter's Church are close and mutually beneficial. All children are valued and are encouraged to develop as individuals within a caring, supportive and stimulating learning environment, based on Christian principles and values.

Established strengths

- The headteacher's outstanding Christian leadership which is well supported by the governing body and the whole school community
- A warm, caring and supportive family atmosphere in which very good relationships are established and all pupils are valued
- The strong and effective link with St Peter's Church

Focus for development

- To build on teachers' confidence in teaching religious education (RE) through sharing best practice in teaching and learning
- Develop the role of governors in monitoring and evaluating RE

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

The school has claimed a verse from the Bible as the core of the school's mission statement: 'Let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in Heaven' (Matthew 5 verse 16). The school is successful in its aim to provide opportunities for the school community to do good deeds; to grow in their understanding of others in different situations and in so doing, give thanks and praise to God. The school verse is displayed on the school sign, the ceramic mosaic at the entrance to school, in numerous places throughout the school and on all documentation. A teacher explained, 'Everyone knows the verse and what it means in the context of our school.' The school demonstrates its commitment to Christian distinctiveness in its 'Commissioning' service at the beginning of the school year. Each group from the school community makes a public commitment to the mission of the school. Parents agreed that 'this starts the school year in a positive way.' They show their overwhelming support for the school and a recent questionnaire highlighted the importance

that many parents place on the impact of the school's Christian ethos on their children. 'The school is concerned with developing the whole child' and 'the school has a warm, welcoming, family feel, where children show care and respect', being typical of comments made by parents. Children enjoy school. They are polite, friendly and very well behaved. The code of behaviour is linked to the school verse and 'light shine' certificates are awarded as one strategy for recognising and celebrating good behaviour. Children show ongoing care for others in organising fund-raising events for those in need. Older children are excellent role models and they respond very well to a range of responsibilities, including acting as buddies to new starters. The staff team has an outstanding work ethic and they spoke of the support and encouragement they get from each other. Their knowledge of all the children helps create a caring and safe environment for them. Children with special needs are supported very well. The school's link with a school in South Africa, Maxonia Primer, is very important to the school. The prospectus explains, 'Our partnership is based on shared Christian values where we can learn from each other and help each other gain an understanding of our place in the world.' The joint projects and visits to and from the school by members of staff has had significant impact on the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. One child reflected, 'The South African children are happy with very little - we have a lot but sometimes forget.'

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is an important feature of school life and is respected and enjoyed by all staff and children. It clearly has a significant impact on the development of Christian principles and values and on the children's knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. Themes are well planned in discussion between the headteacher and the vicar. Staff attend, lead and participate in worship. A newsletter at the start of term announces the theme for worship and weekly newsletters give parents the opportunity to reflect with their children on the current week's focus. Children actively participate in worship expressing thoughts and ideas and in saying their own spontaneous prayers. They are involved in planning and leading significant acts of worship, addressing the issue raised at the last inspection. In the worship observed, the atmosphere was relaxed yet reverent. The headteacher engaged the children, whilst putting across an important Christian message on the theme of peace. Children made appropriate responses during the time of reflection and prayer. The singing by the choir and school was enthusiastic and uplifting. Christian teaching goes beyond the time of worship as children are encouraged to consider the weekly theme in class and reflect back on this in Friday whole-school worship. There are strong links between the school and St Peter's Church, which the school attends, not only to celebrate the main Christian festivals, but for weekly community worship led by the vicar. These services are well attended and enjoyed by family and friends. Children agreed that the vicar 'is fun and this helps us understand things.' Children know the Lord's Prayer and are familiar with Anglican responses. There are many examples of children's own prayers around the school. Children are involved in evaluating worship on a regular basis and highlight areas and elements they would like to be included. For example, they identified their enjoyment of using actions for songs and a number of these have now been learnt. Governors regularly attend and enjoy worship. In the school development plan they have identified the need to have a special school prayer.

The effectiveness of religious education is good

Religious education (RE) has a high profile in the curriculum. The subject coordinator displays outstanding commitment and dedication and is continually seeking to drive change and improvement in how children learn about and from RE. She uses her considerable knowledge and skill to support teachers in their planning of lessons and in assessing and tracking children's achievements. School development planning includes an action for her to inform governors on assessment procedures. The school follows the diocesan syllabus although this is adapted to include a whole school focus on important Christian festivals. Displays throughout the school are of high quality and illustrate the importance, place and value of RE in the life of the school. There is evidence in the children's end of unit assessments, and in the lesson observation of a Key Stage 2 class, that children are encouraged to reflect on their learning and apply this to their own lives. They are given the opportunity to ask questions and to listen and respond to each other in discussion. One child

said 'We can have our own opinions and we don't get told off.' Children have a very good understanding of the Christian faith and other faiths. Their learning about Islam has been enhanced by a visit to a mosque. The school has identified the need to continue to build into the RE teaching and learning a focus on diverse cultures. A variety of teaching and learning strategies are used in RE, including role play, hot-seating, art and use of multi-media resources, although portfolios of photographs have not been compiled to celebrate these different learning experiences. Governors acknowledge the need to be involved in training for monitoring and evaluating RE.

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

The headteacher and governors are highly effective in articulating the Christian ethos and in promoting and establishing that ethos throughout the school and beyond to the community. The headteacher has a strong personal faith and a clear vision for the development of the school as a church school. The excellent team spirit that exists helps staff and children to feel they are part of a caring Christian community. Staff feel valued and share the headteacher's vision and sense of purpose. The school is committed to the professional development of teachers to prepare them for future leadership of church schools. Governors provide appropriate challenge as well as support for the headteacher. A working party of governors has been set up with a clear focus to evaluate, support and develop the core Christian focus of the school. One governor commented, 'We want to make a difference.' Continual self-evaluation informs school development planning and next step targets have been accurately identified by the leadership team. The vicar works closely with the school presenting a positive image of the church. The established and effective school council, with representatives from each class, make important and worthwhile contributions to the school and attend governors' meetings to share their achievements. Parents support the school through regular fund-raising. They speak positively about the way in which their views are sought, valued and acted upon. The school's contribution to the local community is demonstrated through the welcome it gives to parents and members of the community for a range of activities. These include the parents' forum and afternoons of entertainment for specific groups which have been very successful. Prestbury School has a clear sense of direction for further improvement and is right to be proud of its achievements.

SIAS report October 2012 Prestbury C of E Primary, Cheshire, SK10 4JJ