

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Caton St. Paul's Church of England Primary School

Moorside Road,
Brookhouse,
Lancaster,
Lancashire.
LA2 9PJ

Diocese: Blackburn

Local authority: Lancashire
Date of inspection: Friday 23rd March 2012
Date of last inspection: 24th May 2007
School's unique reference number: 119524
Headteacher: Mrs. Carole O'Hare
Inspector's name and number: Mrs. Anne B. Woodcock (445)

School context

Caton St. Paul's Church of England Primary School serves the semi-rural villages of Caton and Brookhouse in the Lune Valley. Pupils also travel from Morecambe and Lancaster to attend this popular and growing school. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage and from slightly higher than average socio-economic groups.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Caton St. Paul's Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

Christian values are well-established and understood by all members of the school community. The strong links with the local church make a very positive contribution to the school's Christian character. The effective Christian example and leadership of the headteacher, staff and governors inspires pupils to achieve their potential.

Established strengths

- The excellent behaviour and attitude of pupils.
- The strong and caring relationships, based on Christian love and trust, which effectively support pupils and their families.
- The clearly expressed Christian vision of the headteacher which is well-supported by staff and governors.

Focus for development

- Provide opportunities for pupils to plan, lead and evaluate worship on a regular basis.
- Introduce a consistent system for the evaluation of worship which involves pupils and leads to improvement.

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

Pupils feel safe, happy and nurtured in school. They are eager to learn and take pride in their achievements. Behaviour is excellent, being firmly based on the Christian values of love, trust and respect. Pupils work very well together, in a calm and trusting atmosphere. "Everyone encourages each other," explained one pupil, "because we are good friends and want to help each other to do well." Older pupils accept their responsibilities with pride, acting as play pals and buddies and supporting the youngest children during worship. Pupils have great trust and confidence in their teachers. They say that teachers help them to solve minor problems and always listen. One pupil explained, "Our teachers encourage us to try and do our best." Teaching is good and the support provided for pupils, including those with additional needs, ensures that all are able to make a positive contribution to the life of the school and reach their potential. Achievement is good and pupils' personal development is outstanding.

Effective use is made of the school's indoor and outdoor environment to support learning and spiritual development. Colourful displays reflect pupils' work and inspire further learning. The many explicitly Christian displays, such as those related to the Bible week held last term, reflect the importance placed on developing spiritual and moral aspects of learning. Reflection areas in classrooms and within the grounds provide places where children can be still and consider their experiences and emotions. Pupils explore the natural world, observing and growing plants for the gardens. They recognise that they have a responsibility to care for and preserve the world God has made. The well-established links with schools in Mombasa and Gambia make a significant contribution to pupils' cultural development. Pupils have a growing understanding of the needs of others and of cultural differences. They are proud of the fact that they raise money to support pupils in these other schools, and maintain the links through writing letters and sharing experiences.

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

Collective worship is a key feature of the daily life of the school. It is well-planned, being firmly based on Christian values and Bible teaching. Pupils speak very positively about their worship experiences. They particularly enjoy the times when they act out a story, saying that doing so helps them to understand and remember it better. Pupils' knowledge of Bible stories and parables is good. They talk confidently about the meanings of the stories and recognise the positive effect such knowledge has on their personal beliefs and ideas. Prayer is an important feature of worship. Pupils write and use their own prayers for use in school and church worship. They know traditional prayers such as the Lord's Prayer, their school prayer and graces used at lunchtime. Pupils enjoy singing together and celebrating their achievements. They sing a wide range of traditional and action songs with joy and enthusiasm. In the celebration worship observed, pupils shared their successes and demonstrated what they had learned through dance and movie making. Quiet music and the use of a focus table with a candle and cross, created a worshipful atmosphere. Children were respectful, but they clearly enjoyed the humour used by the vicar leading the worship. Effective use was made of a short story about gifts. Pupils of all ages were able to understand the theme of the world and Jesus being God's gifts to us. The vicar supports worship very effectively, helping to plan themes and leading worship in school and in church. The links with other local faith communities, such as the Methodist church, provide pupils with a broad worship experience. The church is used for special services such as Easter and Harvest. It is also used at the end of each term. Parents value these services and attend well. Parents also attend, in considerable numbers, the celebration worship on Fridays. They value the opportunity this provides to share in and celebrate their children's work and achievement. Pupils take an active role in leading worship in church by, for example, writing and reading prayers. However, opportunities for pupils to plan, lead and evaluate significant acts of worship regularly are limited and this is a focus for development. Although some informal evaluation of worship is undertaken by the headteacher and vicar, there is no formal system of recording to inform future planning, which is a focus for development.

The effectiveness of the religious education (RE) is good.

Significant improvements have been made since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy religious education (RE), saying that lessons are fun and interesting and that it, "Makes you think about important things such as why God gives people so many second chances." A wide range of teaching and learning activities are used to involve children in their learning and to promote interest. Teachers are secure in their knowledge of the subject and confident in their use of assessment. They challenge and extend children's thinking well. In one lesson observed, older pupils were considering their notion and image of God, using the text, 'The Shack'. Pupils engaged in thoughtful discussion, challenging stereotypes and demonstrating a level of maturity beyond their years. Skilful teacher questioning and intervention inspired pupils to reflect more deeply and challenge their own concepts and ideas. Pupils have some involvement in managing and assessing their own work. Lessons are well-paced and organised, using appropriate resources and additional support. Class portfolios and pupil work reflect the balance achieved between learning about and learning from religion. Pupils are given time to reflect on their learning and to consider how it impacts upon their own beliefs and attitudes. The standards achieved are at least equal to those in other core subjects and pupils make good progress in RE. Pupils have a growing awareness and understanding of other world faiths through their study of Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism.

Effective use is made of the church and other places of worship, such a mosque, to support learning. The subject is well-managed and resourced.

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

The headteacher has a clear Christian vision for the school. She is well supported by a stable and committed staff team who uphold and demonstrate the Christian values of love, trust and respect upon which the school is based. Governors are very supportive. They visit the school regularly, meeting with the school council, helping children in class and running clubs after school. Governors have a clear understanding of their role, monitoring the work of the school and ensuring that church school issues are identified and included in improvement planning. Collaborative leadership ensures that staff share a strong sense of purpose and pride, recognising that their contribution to the work of the school is valued. Support staff value their in-service training and their regular meetings with the headteacher. The areas for future development highlighted in the last inspection have been addressed and the impact of the changes are clearly evident in the levels of pupil work seen in RE. The pupil voice is strong and well-established. Children are proud of their achievements, especially those related to fund raising and supporting local events, such as the Caton Gala. They support national charities such as Children In Need and participate in the local 'time bank' scheme to help elderly people. The links with the church are strong and mutually supportive. Displays of pupil work are placed in church and the school contributes to the local village magazine. Parents are confident that their children are safe and happy in school, nurtured within a distinctly Christian environment which supports their personal and spiritual development well. They say that teachers are approachable and always ready to listen. Parents act as willing helpers and run clubs, such as the gardening club. They value and take advantage of all the opportunities provided to share in their children's work.

SIAS report March 2012 Caton St. Paul's Church of England Primary School, Caton, Lancaster LA2 9JP