

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### St John's C of E (controlled) Primary School

Higham Hall Road  
Higham  
Burnley  
Lancashire  
BB12 9EU

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|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Diocese:</b>                   | <b>Blackburn</b>              |
| Local authority:                  | Lancashire                    |
| Dates of inspection:              | 1 <sup>st</sup> November 2007 |
| Date of last inspection:          | 10-11th October 2003          |
| School's unique reference number: | 119387                        |
| Headteacher:                      | Mrs Heather Hodson            |
| Inspector's name and number:      | Mr Mike Graham 286            |

### School context

St John's School is a voluntary controlled Church of England School in Higham, just north of Burnley. The catchment area is very wide, with pupils from 24 different parishes. Many of the children are, therefore, brought to school by car. The vast majority of pupils are of white British heritage. There are 134 children on roll of whom 11 are on the Special Educational Needs register. The school is usually over-subscribed.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Higham St John's as a Church of England school are outstanding

St John's is an outstanding Church of England School with a very distinctive Christian ethos. There is strong and committed leadership with excellent support from the governing body and all members of staff. Links with St John's church are very close and mutually beneficial. The school is extremely effective in its Christian witness.

### Established strengths

- The excellent relationships within the family of the school
- The high quality of worship which makes a significant contribution to the spiritual development of the children
- The clear Christian vision and inspirational leadership of the Headteacher, very well supported by the Senior Leadership Team and all staff and governors

### Focus for development

- Establish a system of evaluation for worship

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

The children are well mannered and friendly and know that they are special. A clear indicator of this is their calm, unpretentious self-confidence. They are proud of their school and feel

safe within it. The Christian ethos of the school has a positive impact upon the children's personal and academic development. The atmosphere around school is happy and secure with many opportunities for individuals and groups of children to take on responsibilities. A good example of this is the effective way in which Y5 and Y6 pupils support the younger pupils through the 'buddy' system. One parent was delighted about the signed sheet of good wishes to her youngest child, before she had started at school, from her older brother's Y4 classmates. The personal development of each child is enhanced by the provision of child-centred teaching, fund raising activities and extra-curricular clubs in sport and music. The Christian ethos of the school supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all the children very well. Links with a Ugandan Canon and his church, and 'adopted' African children are good examples. Openness, honesty and care for one another stand out. A school Council member commented, "We all care for each other". Relationships between staff and learners, amongst learners and between staff clearly demonstrate Christian values. Within school there are bright and often interactive displays which demonstrate the importance of worship and religious education and encourage reflection. One child commented, "There are lots of things round school that make us think about other people." There are effective areas of focus for worship in the hall, including a special embroidered cloth and a cross and candle. 'Action prayers' are encouraged by a candle display onto which children can place a 'flame', whilst praying for someone in need. One mother had nothing but praise for the way in which the school had cared for her daughter who suffers with a serious medical condition.

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

Worship is central to the life of the school. The planning is very thorough, utilising the Diocesan resources including the 'Wow' worship materials. Children and staff join in worship with enthusiasm. Prayer is used extensively and not just in the daily act of worship. An example given was when the vicar called in to see the Y6 children on their last day in school. He spontaneously prayed with the children. The teacher commented that he believed that they would remember that occasion for a very long time. The children are very positive about worship and value it highly. Comments made included references to the importance of silence. A Y4 boy described vividly how, in the reflective silence, he 'opens a door' within to "send a message to God". In the Harvest Thanksgiving Service on the day of the inspection, all took part with enthusiasm and sincerity. The singing was excellent, and the contributions from the 'Ocarina Orchestra', the readers, percussionists, and the dancers were very moving. The interaction between the children and the Headteacher was delightful: relaxed and yet reverent. There is a clear impact on the children's spiritual development, although systematic evaluation of worship has yet to be developed. The children are eloquent and positive when talking about their beliefs. A parent commented that her children talk naturally and easily about God at home. The vicar and the Headteacher work very closely together and links with the church in worship are strong. The major Festivals are celebrated in church and parents and governors are very supportive. The strong connection with the church and community is seen as being extremely beneficial. The vicar's Eucharist in school and the frequent use of the church as a valued resource lead to a good understanding of Anglican faith and practice.

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

The Headteacher and Foundation Governors promote a distinctive Christian vision for the

school with great enthusiasm. The vicar is fully involved and the governors and church council give their full support. The headteacher's Christian conviction shines through all aspects of her leadership. The Headteacher, Deputy Head and governors are very active in encouraging, monitoring and challenging the school community to realise this vision. The diocesan booklet, 'What makes your church school distinctive' has been completed and diocesan training courses and support are well used to stimulate the whole school. Staff feel valued and involved in putting the vision into practice. The co-operative completion of the school's Self Evaluation Form with numerous references to the school's distinctive Christian ethos is one example of their involvement. The School Council is excellent and is clearly functioning well. It is significant that the Parish Council has contributed £100 to fund it. The children involved know that their contributions are valued and that their suggestions become part of school policy when appropriate. One girl commented, "Staff always try to do what we want!" The vast majority of parents are delighted with the school, and all are given regular and varied opportunities for feedback. A father at the school gate said that any concerns are dealt with immediately.

SIAS report November 2007, St John's C of E Primary, Higham. BB12 9EU