

Report on the Denominational Inspection
carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 of

St. Berteline's CE Primary School

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Web site	www.stbertelines.org.uk
URN	111383
Status	Voluntary Aided
Diocese	Chester
Local Authority	Halton
Type of school	Primary
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Chair of governors	Revd. Stephen Artus
Headteacher	Mrs Julie Barron
Inspection date	6 th /8 th March 2007
Date of previous inspection	May 2002
Inspector	Graham Stephens
Inspector number	313

Summary Judgement

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Berteline's CE Primary School are outstanding.

St. Berteline's is described by parents as the hub of the community, educationally and spiritually, and the close links to the parish church as a valuable part of the children's education. It is an immensely caring school where individuals and their families are very well supported. Worship is the heart of the school where the singing is joyous and the prayers are sincere. This is a happy and successful school.

School context

St. Berteline's is a primary school of approximately 292 pupils. It is part of the Local Education Action Zone. It serves a catchment area of predominantly owner-occupied housing. The school is over-subscribed. The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The building is of open-plan design and is well maintained. The headteacher has been in post for a little over one year and was previously the deputy headteacher. The deputy headteacher has been in post for one year.

Established strengths

- This is a vibrant family-orientated community with a strong vision for learning that is clearly linked to its Christian foundation.
- The dynamic leadership of the headteacher and her comprehensive knowledge of individual pupils and their families.
- The exceptional support from the vicar and the close productive links to the parish church.
- The strong team culture within a highly dedicated and talented staff.

Focus for development

- The informal processes for monitoring and evaluation of religious education needs to be formalised to show clear links to continuous school improvement.

St. Berteline's School is outstanding in meeting the needs of all learners through its distinctive Christian character.

The school places highest priority on providing top quality care. The staff know the children and their families exceptionally well. Christian beliefs are encouraged and developed together with an understanding of wider cultures. Moral codes are understood as are the importance of repentance and forgiveness. Parents feel strongly that the children are nourished in their faith. The Christian vision is well known by all staff and is lived out in daily life. Pupils say that the adults in the school are good at listening to them and helping them. They were able to explain how the posting box in the hall can be used when they are worried and these worries are dealt with on a daily basis. There is a strong feeling of love and purpose throughout the school and the level of collaboration and team working is impressive. The learners are nourished, encouraged and challenged. They know they are loved and that each one of them is important. They are confident in expressing their views and sharing their knowledge and there is a culture of wanting to succeed. Teaching is differentiated, is of a high standard and is made relevant to the experiences of the learners. There is strong support for those who find learning difficult. Achievements are celebrated enthusiastically by staff and pupils alike. Displays throughout the school are impressive and have a strong Christian and cultural emphasis. Artists, some from other cultures, are used to stimulate learning. Some displays are the result of visits to places of interest, such as a cathedral. Pupils have converted plain glass windows to look like the stained glass they found there. There is a special room, called the den that has been developed as a special meeting room and examples of children's work provides interest and encourages reflection. There is a positive attitude throughout the school with smiles and laughter infectious. The Christian ethos is evident at the heart of the curriculum and in the sincere and practical way in which the school responds to personal difficulties.

Collective worship has an outstanding effect on the school community.

Whole school worship is central to the school day. Celebration worship is enjoyed and contributes strongly to the family orientated approach. The emphasis is that everyone can succeed in some way and we should recognise when someone has achieved something special. The teachers' enthusiasm for this is a strong encouragement for the pupils. Birthdays are also celebrated by making the pupils feel special. Support from parents is excellent at the weekly family services and staff participate

enthusiastically and contribute in practical ways. The worship is for everyone and not just for the children. There is good use of musical instruments and actions for the songs. The parents are able to feel part of the focus for the family service, for example when a visitor described how we can all help to relieve poverty by supporting Fair Trade. The learners clearly see school worship as important and relevant and their level of participation is high. The children move from joyous singing to reverent prayer with ease and without direction from adults. Worship is linked to the thematic approach to the school curriculum and to events that affect the school and community. In the prayers the school community is asked to support families who are experiencing difficulties. This helps to consolidate the caring nature of the school community. Personal prayers are encouraged and children use them throughout school life. Some parents said that their children reflect on their school day in their evening prayers. The importance of prayer is shown in the school's Starter Pack where present pupils decorate a welcoming prayer and there is a gift of a book on the Lord's Prayer. There are excellent links with the parish church and the vicar is very much a member of the school team. He is well known and liked by the children. He regularly leads the weekly family service within school. He supports learning by undertaking monitoring of lessons. As he is present in school on most days he is able to contribute to informal discussions relating to the work of the school.

The effectiveness of religious education is good.

The quality of the teaching is monitored and is consistently high. The lessons observed were differentiated and meaningful. The teachers demonstrate good knowledge. The quality of learning, as seen in the written work, is monitored informally as part of the planning process. The rich thematic approach to the curriculum ensures that religious education is seen as integral to all learning and is important. The pupils are proud of the work in their books and were able to refer to work they had done when discussing aspects of the Church Year. This work reflected the standards found in core curriculum subjects. Pupils used appropriate vocabulary to express their good understanding and knowledge of the Christian faith and of the Anglican tradition. Pupils were able to reflect and to make reasoned responses to questions. Spiritual and moral development is a priority for the school. The pupils are able to discuss the importance of rules and of saying sorry when they are broken and they are able to articulate that Christian faith places importance on forgiveness. Within staff development there is an emphasis on the development of the individual rather than on specific curriculum areas therefore training for religious education and collective worship is not identified separately. Good use is made of visits and visitors to enhance pupils' experience in RE. Curriculum-based questionnaires completed by teachers provide information on how religious education could be improved, however the action plan does not identify areas for development in RE but deals only with collective worship.

Leadership and management of the school as a church school are outstanding.

The headteacher very clearly articulates the school's Christian vision and she and the governors are highly effective in ensuring the quality of the distinctive Christian character. The staff are fully committed to the Christian ethos providing positive role models for pupils. The school has been described as the hub of the community and parental support is high. The very strong team spirit among the dedicated and talented staff is a major strength of the school and the governors are very aware of the importance of quality appointments to support the Christian ethos. The support staff also have clear roles in their support of the learning as demonstrated by the school administrator who plays the piano for worship and has undertaken training to support pupils with English as a second language. Stakeholders' views are sought and listened to. There is a School Council and pupils have completed questionnaires on collective worship. The school leadership has discussed a suggestion through the replies that worship might be reorganised according to the ages of the pupils but decided that this could detract from the special family atmosphere of the whole school. The school encourages baptism and the pupils are very positive about wanting to undertake confirmation. There are close links with other church schools and family initiatives such as Family Learning Workshops and Dads' Reading Afternoon consolidate the importance the school leadership gives to supporting the whole family. The school leadership has created and maintained an environment rich in Christian ethos that parents and pupils greatly value. This is reflected in the very high numbers of leavers who choose to continue their education at Church of England secondary schools.