

# National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

## Shire Oak Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Wood Lane  
Headingley  
Leeds  
LS6 2DT

### Diocese: Ripon and Leeds

Local authority: Leeds  
Dates of inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> May 2008  
Date of last inspection: Amalgamated School 2006  
School's unique reference number: 131570  
Headteacher: Mr Mark Edwards  
Inspector's name and number: Meg Cooper 438

### School context

Shire Oak is an amalgamated school replacing St Michael's Voluntary Aided School and Headingley Primary from September 2006. In 2007 a further group of learners was admitted from two additional schools that were closing. The school serves the inner city area of Hyde Park, and the areas of Cookridge, Meanwood and Kirkstall Valley. Half of the school population is White British with the remainder being from the wide cultural and ethnic heritage of Eastern Europe, China, Pakistan, India and the Caribbean. The proportion eligible for free school meals is average as is the number of learners with learning difficulties.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Shire Oak as a Church of England school are satisfactory with good features.

The school has a strong inclusive ethos of learners' personal development and wellbeing. Its values and purposes are clearly stated through its ethos statement. The headteacher and governors have a clear vision for ensuring that the distinctive and inclusive nature of the school enables all stakeholders to contribute to school improvement.

### Established strengths

- The enthusiastic leadership of the headteacher in a climate that reflects the strong relationships with staff and learners.
- The opportunities that are created for learners to experience the diversity of moral, social and cultural development.
- The Christian principle of inclusion which is identified as a key part of the school's practice.

### Focus for development

- Access training opportunities for all who are involved in leading collective worship.
- Develop monitoring and evaluation systems for collective worship led by foundation governors in consultation with the collective worship leader and the leadership team.
- Establish opportunities for learners to increase their understanding of spiritual awareness.
- Extend and embed current strategies for consistent behaviour management.

### The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is satisfactory with good features at meeting the needs of all learners

Most learners feel valued, enjoy much of their work, find it interesting and move along the road to developing their potential. Great emphasis is placed on the creative curriculum and also the many extra curricula activities attended by the vast majority of learners. There is evidence of high quality work in the communal areas including a tile mural showing the history of St Michael's, Headingley and Shire Oak schools. The displays are interesting and show learners' commitment to Fair Trade, 'Eco Peko', the mascot for being eco-friendly, and the school's link to Sri Lanka. The statement 'Not for self but for

everyone' is prominently displayed. The quality of displays in some classrooms is not of a similar standard. Learners say that they are normally treated with equality and respect and the school rules help them to feel secure and happy. There has been a huge input into behaviour management and this has been successful as the monitoring of incidents shows, although there is a small amount of low level disruptive behaviour evident. However the strategies in place are having a positive impact and learners say conflicts are dealt with fairly in a spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation. The learners are well supported by the Learning Mentor and Parent Support Adviser. Learners are beginning to develop their individual spiritual awareness and the school is successful in using its distinctive and inclusive Christian character to nourish, encourage and challenge the moral, social and cultural development of the large majority of learners. Learners possess a growing sense of self and are encouraged and praised when they apply faith based moral values to decisions and actions. The large majority of learners and staff feel that their views are taken seriously. Nearly everyone works collaboratively and co-operatively and can talk openly about how the Christian values in school have an impact on their professional life. The teaching and support staff work hard and have an empathy with the difficulties experienced by some learners. Parents of different cultures and faiths speak highly of the school, stating that the communication is excellent through letters, e-mails and recently by text, informing them if their child has done something well. They value the residentials, visits, and 'Stay and Play' initiative in Reception. They state that the headteacher and staff are in the playground daily and welcome any discussion with parents. The school fundraises money for a college in Sri Lanka through the diocesan international link and staff have made exchange visits with plans for learners to make the journey. The school also supports charities locally and globally.

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

The school's policy for worship is implemented and acts of worship are planned by individual teachers following themes set by the collective worship leader. Some informal monitoring and verbal feedback is undertaken by the headteacher but not currently by foundation governors. This is a missed opportunity because expertise is not shared and used to improve the overall quality and impact. During whole school collective worship, some staff are present and all lead on a rota basis. All staff lead class based worship and there is an emphasis on silent reflection and prayer. Account is taken of the needs of those from other or no faith backgrounds. At the beginning of collective worship there is no focus for learners, such as a candle being lit, to mark the moment of silence. This results in a few learners not engaging in the spirit of worship and affects the overall impact. The school is fortunate in having the vicars from St Chad's and Wrangthorne coming to lead collective worship and also ministers from Methodist churches and the Baptist church. Although the vicar of St Michael's does not currently lead collective worship, the school is welcome to visit the church to support the curriculum. The school is keen to strengthen the partnership with St Michael's and the headteacher attends the PCC annually to give a report and writes for the church magazine. The School holds the Christmas and Leavers' services in church and these are well attended by parents of all faiths. Learners have played steel drums in church and a group has attended a Sunday service with the headteacher to share their Sri Lankan link with the congregation. The highly committed church wardens and foundation governors are working hard to maintain and improve links and have drawn up a list to 'Capture Ideas' for the future. The school has a notice board in church kept updated by a member of staff. Learners and parents are invited to the All Age Eucharist service monthly. A Peace festival was held recently that involved parents and learners bringing into school a symbol of peace. Faiths and cultures were represented through dance, music, food, a prayer tree and flowers from church, and the climax of the celebration was the release of white doves.

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

The headteacher has worked very hard to bring together the learners from four schools and the staff of two. This has been ably supported by the commitment of his deputy headteacher and team. He is passionate about the ethos of the school as a church school. Governors and staff worked on a 'Visioning Day' at the time of amalgamation to draw up an ethos statement. This is reviewed regularly and these effective monitoring and evaluation processes by governors have supported the identification of strengths and weaknesses to inform School Improvement Planning. A large majority of stakeholders speak confidently and accurately about the school's Christian vision and this is evident in all public documentation and communications. Parents and learners speak positively of the way in which the school seeks values and views. The school community is spread over a very large area with the immediate area being mainly student accommodation. This constrains parents' easy access to school and so the school has responded by reviewing communication systems to help parents feel they are in touch. The school recognises and celebrates its wide cultural richness and visits are made to the local mosque. Parents from the Far East and Eastern Europe have been encouraged to come into school and

share an aspect of their culture. The school's leaders have communicated the vision to staff and they feel confident about their part in sharing the ongoing vision. Foundation Governors are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to collective worship but need to develop and implement strategies for monitoring and evaluation. Governors work hard and are working towards the accreditation Governors' Charter Mark.

SIAS report May 2008 Shire Oak, Headingley, Leeds. LS6 2DT