

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Abram Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Simpkin Street,

Wigan

WN2 5QE

**Diocese: Liverpool**

Local Authority: Wigan

Headteacher: Mr. T. Fletcher

Inspection date: 20-30 November 2005

Date of previous inspection: November 1999

Inspector: Elizabeth Collins

### **Summary Judgement**

Abram Church of England Primary School offers its pupils a secure place in which to learn overall, but there are inconsistencies in the quality of and the vision for developing a distinctive Christian ethos in line with its Anglican foundation.

### **School Context**

The present building was opened in 1979 following the amalgamation of two Aided schools. It is of average size with 220 pupils on role. Situated on an open site in the centre of a private housing estate, most of the children live a short distance away in a much more socially and economically deprived area. Pupils attainment on enter is below the national average and the number identified as having special educational needs is above average. All children have English as a first language.

### **Established strengths**

- the range of extra-curricular activities available to support pupils' academic and social development
- the regular use of parent questionnaires to ascertain their views

### **Focus for development**

- review the mission statement in the context of the school's Christian foundation;
- raise the awareness of the school's distinctive ethos amongst pupils and parents through its prominence in policies and practice, especially with regard to collective worship and religious education

### **How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?**

The school makes considerable effort to offer care and concern to all learners to ensure that they feel safe and secure. This fulfils the Mission Statement which speaks of educating 'our children within a Christian moral framework in a family environment where they will feel happy and safe' and across the school there is a clear acknowledgement of common values. General humanitarian norms and expectations are recognised and understood clearly and form a good basis for supportive relationships between all members of the community. Pupils with learning and physical needs are offered sensitive support by their peers and feel valued within the community; provision for pupils' personal development is at least satisfactory and pupils enjoy a considerable number of exciting and challenging opportunities; the majority of children are relaxed and confident with adults and visitors. These shared values, however, are seldom placed overtly within 'a Christian moral framework': The school Vision Statement does not amplify the 'Christian framework'; gospel values or Christian teaching are not linked to any pertinent policy documents e.g. pupil behaviour, Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education; there are limited visual signs to identify the school's religious foundation and Christian teaching is not the first point of reference when dealing with moral and social questions.

### **What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?**

Acts of collective worship are generally satisfactory in content and presentation and fulfil legal requirements. A daily assembly - one session being a hymn practice - is part of the routine of the school's day. Pupils respond in a positive manner to these occasions: they are eager to take part, to answer questions and sing fairly vigorously. They know the Lord's Prayer and understand how to use basic liturgical responses correctly. The meetings give a good opportunity for them to display their knowledge of aspects of the Church's year and to rehearse some Biblical knowledge. The use of prayer is generally appropriate, but there is little use of music to create an atmosphere for worship or to make children feel this meeting together is different from the rest of the day. Prayers are also said before lunch and there is a leavers' Eucharist in the Parish Church which parents are keen to attend. Only at the whole school assembly are all teaching staff present and the Key Stage 1 assembly often only has the leader present. Although some visitors are used regularly, there is no set pattern for the Parish Priest to lead or take part in collective worship other than when the school goes to Church for major festivals. The worship policy is a LEA model which does not bear the school's name, has no relationship to its Aided status or the particular needs and aptitudes of the children, or makes clear how worship underpins the Christian ethos of the school.

### **How effective is the religious education?**

Most pupils are positive about RE, enjoy their lessons and are confident to demonstrate their learning. The majority are working in line with the expectations of the syllabus and have appropriate knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. Teaching is satisfactory overall and good use is made of support staff to allow children to work at a level appropriate to their needs. Class teachers generally take their own group for RE, but three Key Stage 2 classes are taught by a Teaching Assistant alone following the teachers' plans. This does not give these classes the same opportunities as their peers. The Diocesan syllabus is in place and generally used satisfactorily, although the emphasis in teaching is on 'learning about' with little attention being given to 'learning from'. There is no process for assessment in place and the co-ordinator has is unaware of pupils' standards in the subject. There has been little development in RE since the introduction of the new Diocesan syllabus. Major issues raised by the co-ordinator at that time have not been addressed and development since has concentrated on trivial points only casually associated by the subject. This does not reflect appropriately on the place of RE in a Church school.

### **How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?**

The governors, headteacher and senior staff provide satisfactory leadership and management overall, but there is no evidence that they have considered corporately a whole school vision which takes account of the distinctiveness of Aided status. As no such vision is articulated in any school documentation there is no benchmark for senior personnel to use to monitor and challenge the school in developing a distinctive ethos and character. Other than in its name it is equally difficult for the school to be overtly promoted as a school which has a distinctive character and a particular vision to support its ethos and practice.

SIAS November 2005 Abram Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School Wigan  
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