

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

All Saint's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Long Street
Wigston Magna
Leics.
LE18 2AH

Diocese: Leicester

LA: Leicestershire

Dates of inspection: 7th and 9th June 2006

Date of last inspection: 7th to 10th November 2000

School's Unique reference number: 120206

Headteacher: Mrs Mary Lawson

Inspector's name and number: Miss Margaret Matthews (No: 95)

School context

All Saint's School is situated in the suburb of Wigston Magna, five miles south of Leicester. It occupies a green site with spacious, modern buildings and grounds; and has an integral community centre. The history of its foundation dates back at least 125 years. There are 240 pupils on roll, mainly from a white British background. The school serves a mixed socio-economic area, and many children need extra help with their learning. Since the appointment of the new Head Teacher, 18 months ago, the school has undergone major changes.

Summary Judgement

All Saint's is rapidly becoming a very good Church of England school under the outstanding leadership of the Head Teacher. Its distinctive ethos, based on Christian beliefs and values, is obvious throughout the school and has made a significant impact on relationships across the community. Many aspects of the school, including links with the parish church, are still in the process of development, but there is a good capacity to improve.

Established strengths

- A renewed spirit of improvement throughout the school.
- The quality of Christian display and signage in the school environment.
- The Leadership of the Head Teacher.
- The spiritual quality of prayer and singing in collective worship.
- The work of the RE co-ordinator.

Focus for development

- Continue the development of RE by improving pupils' written work and raising teacher expectation.
- Extend and develop the practice of 'stilling' in lessons and in worship.
- Develop links with the church.
- Improve classroom worship.

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

The school, through its Christian character, meets the needs of all learners.

In the last year the school has made remarkable progress in developing its Christian distinctiveness. At the centre of the school's mission, 'Giving our best together,' is the holistic education of each child as an individual, living in harmony with others. Learners are happy; they like their school and believe it is a good school to attend. Relationships across the school community have improved and most staff feel a renewed confidence in working together within a Christian context. The care and guidance given to pupils is good. Challenging behaviour is well managed and pupils speak with pleasure of having a Head Teacher who is 'fun, but fair.' Pupils feel valued because their views are sought and taken into account. The introduction of 'Houses,' the School Council, an effective rewards system and the recognition of achievement in assemblies has led to a rise in pupils' self-esteem, attitudes and behaviour. Parents speak warmly of the many new initiatives which highlight the school's Christian character. They believe, for example, that the growing number of

visits to the church has a positive influence upon their children. This was demonstrated when pupils' own sense of the spiritual erupted into spontaneous song as they processed from the school to the church for their 'Palm Sunday' service. Parental support is welcomed and parents have now become involved in a variety of ways, such as helping to set up the new library. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners is good. Their interests are well met through an increasing number of after school clubs and through the opportunity to participate in extra activities, such as helping with the senior citizens' club each week, or dramatising the story of Pentecost at the Celebrate 80 Festival for the Archbishop of Canterbury. Links with the parish church are still under-developed but progress is being made. The school is strongly committed to principles of inclusion. Children and parents from other faiths willingly share in Christian worship and offer enlightening insights into their own beliefs and practices. The school environment is becoming rich in its Christian culture: every classroom has a Salvadorian cross and every child has planted a bulb in the courtyard Peace garden where pupils can seek quietness. The outstanding quality and quantity of Christian signs and symbols, displays, statements and prayers throughout the building remind pupils of their Christian heritage and leave no doubt that this is an Anglican Church School.

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

Collective worship makes a satisfactory impact on the school community.

In whole school worship there has been a rejuvenation which parents describe as being a 'wonderful improvement.' Classroom worship, however, is less successful and is in need of development and staff training. Worship that takes place in the halls has taken on a new importance in the life of the school and has become a source of spiritual inspiration for children and adults. Suitable music, a focal table and a lighted candle, evoke a worshipful atmosphere. Pupils' attitudes are good; there is a relaxed but secure relationship between them as worshippers and the Head Teacher, as leader. They are at ease with the process of worship; they listen well and enjoy it. Stories relate to the present and each message, such as 'Trust in God' or 'Having a second chance,' comes over well. Singing and prayer have emerged as powerful features and make a significant contribution to the spiritual development of pupils. The singing is very enthusiastic and transforms the worship, invigorating its purpose. As a contrast, the use of the 'singing bowl' is extraordinarily effective in drawing pupils to prayer. The Lord's Prayer is said every day, a school prayer is being adopted and a blessing is sung at the end of the worship. Prayers written by children are also used. The presence and active participation of all staff, and of parents attending class-led assemblies, enhances the sense of unity engendered by the worship; and supports the leaders. Worship in the classrooms does not, on the whole, meet this standard because there is no attempt to create an atmosphere conducive to worship, so the experience remains much like a lesson, often with too much questioning. Leaders, generally, try to cover more ground than is necessary. Singing and prayer continue to be good. Pupils are well nurtured in the Anglican tradition by, for example, the coloured ribbons draped on the small cross, representing the Christian calendar and by the Ashing Service held in the school on Ash Wednesday. The vicar leads school worship on special occasions and the school is using the parish church more often for services at major Christian festivals. The Head Teacher's personal commitment ensures that there is a consistent emphasis on the spiritual aspect of each act of worship, whatever its content.

How effective is the religious education?

Religious education is very effective.

Religious education has a high profile in the school. Pupils' progress is at least satisfactory or better and is improving. This is because staff have responded well to the enthusiasm and leadership of the co-ordinator who has developed RE, considerably, over the last year. Standards, overall, are good but written work and presentation are unsatisfactory because teacher expectation is too low. Learning in RE is directly related to the quality of teaching. Where teaching is good, learners are totally absorbed and at one with their teacher. Pupils are very responsive when motivated. Oral work is particularly successful and the technique of 'talking partners'

is well used. Effective use is made of the church building for study. During the inspection there were some good examples of questions being matched to learners' differing abilities. The exceptionally high standard of RE in one class is the direct result of good planning; peaceful delivery with a spiritual aim; challenging activities (such as choosing the best reason for buying a bible;) close pupil/teacher relationships; and a high level of expectation. Learners' attitudes in RE are good; they like the subject and particularly enjoy learning about other religions. Sikh children in the school make a very good contribution to lessons. They feel confident and interested in RE. and on being shown a picture of Jesus, one of them remarked, 'This helps me to focus on my God.' Long term planning, assessment and evaluation need, and are scheduled for, development next year. The maxim 'less is more' has yet to be applied in some lessons where over-planning causes pupils to become restless or confused. RE has a significant impact on pupils' spiritual development. In Key Stage 2 an excellent guided meditation, with visual aids, gave rise to an intensely spiritual moment as the Dead Sea Scrolls were retrieved from the cave. In Key Stage 1 the process of 'stilling' was used to great effect in highlighting the spiritual quality of the lesson. The combination of stillness and music in unveiling the story of Jesus' baptism drew an excellent response from learners, including those with special needs. The importance of RE in the school is reflected in its full allocation of curriculum time, its improving resources and its place in the school improvement plan. The link governor for RE is a frequent visitor and takes a keen interest in developments. To date there has been no in service training, but a day led by the Diocesan Director on 'What it means to be a Church School,' will take place in August.

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

The leadership and management of the school, as a church school, are outstanding.

The school's growing success is directly attributable to the Head Teacher who leads exceptionally well through personal example. She has a strategic vision which maintains and drives the Christian character of the school and is crucial in raising the profile of its 'Aided' status. Her professional approach has raised the morale and motivation of most members of the school community. Staff feel a sense of empowerment; and parents value her 'open-door' policy. The Head Teacher has initiated a wide range of improvements which lift not only pupils' academic standards, but also their levels of personal and spiritual development. Efforts to raise standards are a priority in which everyone is invited to share. The governing body fully supports the Head Teacher in promoting the school's Christian foundation through outward signs such as the large cross on the front of the building and through the provision of a bible for every child in the school. The Mission Statement underpins policy and practice in the school and community centre; and the Aims are expressed through Christian values in the School Prospectus and other documents. The foundation governors have become much more involved in the school. They have helped to complete the National Society 'Toolkit' and they provide effective links with the community and the church. Their role in monitoring religious education and collective worship is under-developed. The school's relationship with the Diocese is growing. Although help has been given to develop religious education and collective worship, the school would like more; and would appreciate greater involvement with the Cathedral. In her efforts to make the links between the parish church and the school stronger, the Head Teacher has given a presentation to the PCC and has become an ex-officio member. The parish priest is a great support. He makes a significant contribution to the school and is a familiar face about the building. A number of plans are being developed to enhance the church/school partnership. Issues from the previous Section 23 Report have been addressed. The school has embarked upon the process of self-evaluation, as a church school, and has been realistic in its findings. The Head Teacher and RE co-ordinator are open minded, objective and willing to take advice, therefore the school has a good capacity to improve.