

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Canon Johnson Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Elgin Street
Ashton-U-Lyne
Tameside
Manchester
OL7 9DD

Diocese: Manchester

Local authority: Tameside

Date of inspection: 7th December 2007

Date of last inspection: 19th & 20th May 2003

School's unique reference number: 106243

Headteacher: Mrs Susan Warburton

Inspector's name and number: Reverend Maureen Read 451

School context

Canon Johnson Church of England Primary School serves an area which includes mainly council built accommodation and owner occupied small terraced housing. The school borders on the Ashton Regeneration Area and is located in a Super Output Area of England placing it within the highest 15 percentile of social deprivation. The majority of children are from White British backgrounds. It is an average sized school with 220 children on roll including up to 13 full-time equivalent places in the Nursery. Most children enter with below the national expectations; 20.4% of children are identified as having special needs.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Canon Johnson Primary School as a Church of England school are good

The school's main Christian values of love, respect and forgiveness, supported by the Every Child Matters agenda, underpin all of its work. The school offers a supportive, happy and healthy environment where learning and encouraging one another are paramount. The distinctive Christian philosophy leads the children to make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development where they learn to see God in all things.

Established strengths

- The Senior Management Team's commitment to Christian values as the base of the life, work and witness of the school.
- The prominent and effective roles of the Eco Committee and the School Council in decision-making.
- The achievement of high standards of behaviour in sometimes very challenging contextual circumstances.
- The support and leadership provided by the RE coordinator.

Focus for development

- To consider a short and snappy mission logo based on the longer Mission Statement for use on documentation sent out on behalf of the school.
- To provide reflection areas in KS2 classrooms.
- To build a bank of suitable RE resources for use with interactive whiteboards specifically linked to the schemes of work for each year group.

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

There is a very strong Christian ethos within the school, which has a positive impact on all involved with the life of the school. The atmosphere on coming into the building is that of warmth and welcome. All children express great pride in being an important member of Canon Johnson Primary School. They feel valued and special and enjoy coming to school.

KS2 pupils told of their hopes and aspirations for their own futures, and also the future of the planet. Everybody in school is made aware of worldwide ecological issues through the ongoing priority given to PSHE and the work of the Eco Committee and its representatives. Children think and care beyond the school and their local community, embracing God's wider world. All members of the school see PSHE and Circle Time as important, with the children saying that they are always treated fairly; they feel that there is a strong sense of justice, equality and respect in school. Older children demonstrate good responsibility through helping those who are younger and providing a suitable role model for their future development, they act as peer supporters at playtime and dinner time. KS2 children help the younger children come into worship quietly as they fulfill their roles of escorts. The school has forged close links with the local community which has enabled children to reflect and engage sympathetically in showing their concern for others. For example, the choir sings at 'Cranberries', the school raise money for Red Nose Day and Barnardo's and harvest gifts are distributed both locally and to the homeless in Manchester. The whole school has been instrumental in contributing to the church's bid for a new community centre. Children are continually responding generously to current issues. All are brought and held together, within the love of God. The quality of relationships between all members of the school community has a positive impact on the children's achievements and their sense of self worth. Children develop a good sense of respect for the environment because, within the constraints of age, wear and tear, the accommodation offered through the school building is good and very well cared for. Inside and outside space has been maximized to the full.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective Worship is an important feature of the school with all children partaking in a daily act of worship offered in a variety of forms. All worship takes place in a calm atmosphere continually enriching, inspiring and affirming the lives of the whole school community. Children have a good knowledge and understanding of Anglican practice because worship frequently takes place in the nearby parish church, they celebrate major themes within the Christian year and the Eucharist each half term. Prayer is a feature within the daily life of the school. Children learn and use the Lord's prayer and the school prayer. A variety of prayers, including those written by children, are used in assemblies and at the ending of the day. This has had the impact of encouraging all children to become both compassionate and responsible people. They enjoy, participate in and lead worship with enthusiasm. Children are very respectful in worship, as demonstrated by the way they enter and leave in silence. Additional, deeper exploration through RE leads the children to a clearer understanding and greater participation through singing, reading, leading intercessions, questioning and answering. Planning is recorded and monitored regularly with evaluations offered on occasions.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

RE is given important status within the curriculum, as it is linked within other curriculum areas wherever possible. At the Foundation Stage children are able to explore feelings, emotions and behaviour towards others through Bible stories. The needs of all pupils are met because the school has adopted the diocesan scheme with the coordinator making adaptations to cater more specifically to the needs of the children. This ensures that children both learn about and from religion, for example, children are able to think beyond a Bible story or belief and to relate it to their own daily lives because open-ended differentiated questioning is a strength within lessons. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, showing both their enjoyment of the subject and that they know what is expected of them. Links with Pakistan and visits from Islamic parents have helped children, from a mainly White British background, to understand more fully the strands of other faith work within the RE curriculum. Their understanding of Christianity is also sound because emphasis is given to the teaching of Christianity whilst units on Islam and Hinduism reflect the faith of a minority of children in the school. Displays around the school are all of a very high standard, many of them are interactive, giving additional support to the good quality of RE teaching and learning. The coordinator has always been very enthusiastic about her work. She is effective in the way she monitors and supports colleagues and plans appropriate work for the children using the guidelines given in the Diocesan Syllabus. Religious Education contributes strongly to the school's Christian distinctiveness.

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

The leadership and management of the school are very effective in promoting a distinctive Christian vision. The headteacher values and nurtures everybody involved with the school, resulting in high levels of collaboration and cooperation combined with a growing stability amongst staff and governors. The School Council and the Eco Committee are comprised of children and adults; they play a big part in decision-making. The children involved see it as a responsible position and an honour in representing their peers. The school is very good at gathering and responding to the views of all involved including parents and children. The results of questionnaires and discussions all show a high level of satisfaction with the school. Links between the Church and School are very strong. The school Governors work very effectively alongside the headteacher to ensure that the Christian distinctiveness of the school is maintained; this helps children and parents to understand that they belong to a caring Christian community which values and respects them as individuals. Governors fully support the vision of the head teacher whilst offering her the challenge to improve the school further. Although the Parish Church is in interregnum the school has always benefited from the presence of the Parish Priest through leading worship and providing pastoral support, a valued presence within the daily life of the school. The school has successfully addressed the issues for action following the last denominational inspection. The school, under the leadership of the headteacher, her deputy, the governing body and a newly appointed Parish Priest has the capacity to build on their improving standards.

SIAS report December 2007: Canon Johnson Church of England Primary School, Elgin Street Ashton-U-Lyne, OL7 9DD.