

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

The Parish Church Oldham Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior School

Horsedge Street,
Oldham,
OL1 3PU

Diocese: Manchester

Local authority: Oldham

Dates of inspection: 26th June 2007

Date of last inspection: 2002

School's unique reference number: 105696

Headteacher: Mrs. J. Bennett

Inspector's name: Brenda McGregor

School context

Parish Church Junior School is a two form entry Junior School with 222 children on roll, 48% indigenous and the remainder mainly of Pakistan or Bangladesh heritage and Muslim. There is high social and economic deprivation with 49% of children eligible for free school meals. The majority of the surrounding housing is rented from the council.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Oldham Parish Junior School as a Church of England school are outstanding

Christian values are clearly embodied in the ethos of the school, resulting in well informed, calm and well behaved children. These values are clearly stated in the Mission Statement and implied in the school motto of "Caring, Sharing and Learning". Children and staff live up to the high expectations placed on them.

Established strengths

- The outstanding Christian ethos of caring and nurturing of all stakeholders;
- The good behaviour of the children, resulting in a calm haven;
- The outstanding input of senior management, staff, the rector and Governors to ensure the continuing development of the Christian vision and of children reaching their full potential.

Focus for development

- To appoint a separate Religious Education co-ordinator
- To include more I.T. in Religious Education.

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

Oldham Parish Junior School recognises and celebrates all children's achievements. They feel safe and secure and the curriculum is differentiated according to individual needs, which successfully enhances pupils' self esteem. The Christian ethos is strong; Christian values are clearly stated in policy aims and objectives and are supported by the Mission Statement, School Motto and prospectus. The pupils' spiritual development is very good because this is delivered through the whole curriculum, especially RE and collective worship, and enhanced by the high quality of displays and artefacts around school. Their moral development is also very good; pupils know what is right and wrong and support charities very effectively. Older children care for younger children very well and the school council is effective, leading to good social development. This is also supported by before and after school clubs with a third of the school attending the breakfast club. Cultural development is very strong through the exploration and respect of other cultures, where art and music make significant contributions.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship has a good impact on the spiritual and moral development of the children

since it involves them in prayer and reflection and uses music, cross, candle and artefacts to create an effective atmosphere for worship. The children lead school assemblies on a weekly basis and are keen to participate. They also lead services in the Parish Church with which the school has good links. Children have benefited from singing in other churches in the Diocese. They achieve a good understanding of Anglican faith and practice by experiencing worship led by a variety of people, including the headteacher, rector and visitors. The children know well several Christian prayers, including the Lord's Prayer, and they sing a variety of hymns and Christian songs. Collective worship is central to school life. It is firmly based in Christian worship but other faiths are celebrated and respected and all children are affirmed by having similarities and common beliefs valued.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Pupils' attainment in RE is below average but they make good progress. They also show good spiritual and moral development as a result of their religious education, supported by PSHE and circle time. They have good attitudes towards RE and have successfully absorbed Christian values, which are evident in the way they behave towards one another. Pupils experience a good range of learning experiences such as visits to the Jewish Museum and visits from the Bishop and Archdeacon and presentations from Bible Encounter. Role play is also used to good effect but there is little IT used in RE lessons. The management of RE is currently undergoing change with the headteacher's retirement; a new co-ordinator, syllabus and recording procedures are being brought into place and the school has the capacity to do this successfully.

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

The headteacher, senior management, rector and governors provide outstanding support for the school's Christian values and the ongoing development of its Christian vision. The Christian ethos achieved in this multi-ethnic school is commendable. For example, it continues to maintain the Investors in People Award, first gained in 1996. The headteacher's priorities are the children's welfare and learning and in this she is fully supported by her deputy, staff, the rector, governors and Diocese. The governors are fully involved in the school's self-evaluation, monitoring, meeting curriculum co-ordinators and having a designated class. They regularly attend collective worship and training with several diocesan courses being held in the school. A lot of work has been done on making parents welcome but the response has not been as positive as envisaged. This is an area continually being explored.

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