

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Alphege Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary school

Widney Manor Road

Solihull

B91 3JG

Diocese: Birmingham

Local Authority: Solihull

School URN: 103399

Date of Inspection: 31st October 2007

Mrs Elizabeth Walker - 160

School context

St Alphege Junior School is situated near the centre of Solihull. The school is a very popular school and held in high regard within the community. The school is fully inclusive meeting the needs of all its pupils academically, culturally, and from all faiths within a caring environment. The majority of pupils come from white British backgrounds and enter school at a level higher than the local and national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Alphege as a Church of England school are outstanding

The dynamism and sense of purpose that all stakeholders display in upholding the Christian values the school shows and shares with its community are exceptional. Pupils of all faiths and others are integrated well into the Christian life of the school and contribute significantly to the well being of the community both in the school and the parish.

Established strengths

- The exceptional quality of the distinctive Christian learning environment the school provides for its community
- The quality of teaching and learning in RE is outstanding
- The pastoral care and support for learners is outstanding
- The relationships between the learners, staff, parents and the Parish are outstanding

Focus for development

- To continue and develop the focus on evaluation of worship by pupils so their views continue to be heard and taken into account

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

The intensity and commitment to ensuring the Gospel values and the love of Christ which are an integral part of every learner's life is exceptional. It is this core belief embedded in an agreed set of core values which underpins school life and is reflected in every policy and process. The strong relationships which permeate all aspects of school life and are also reflected through the commitment of the clergy and parish staff who provide exceptionally high quality support to the worshipping life of the school. A Children's worker forges strong relationship through her work in the parish which continues in school so learners are familiar and confident in both environments. The learners produce high quality pieces of writing and creative work which is used to enhance worship in both settings. The parental support for the work and ethos of the school are measured carefully and their views leave the school in no doubt that the Christian ethos is one in which they have every confidence and is very important to their children's well being. Learners happily work and play very well together, caring about themselves and the varied environments which they can enjoy and have fun. There is a strong commitment to respecting other faiths and traditions. Behaviour is very good and learners are purposefully engaged in the huge range of activities which are provided during and after school. Learners are eager to come to school and attendance is very good. There is an excellent and varied range of out of school activities; learners are given very good opportunities to explore a wide range of sporting, creative and reflective activities. The school initiated the diocesan schools football competition which attracts entries from across the diocese and brings

learners of all faiths to enjoy playing together.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

“Our worship sets the tone of the day and provides us with time to think and reflect” This very clear statement from a Year 5 pupil is the reality for many learners who use the time productively and respond equally well to the varied menu and styles of worship. They are eager to respond and participate but are equally gentle and quiet when engaged in thoughts and prayers. Acts of worship engage the learners through the well planned themes and surroundings. These are based on biblical teaching and Christian values but incorporate teachings from other faiths when appropriate. The ambience, the resources and preparation all contribute to outstanding acts of worship. A school Eucharist is held at some time during every term. Pupils play an active part in the preparation for all worship through selecting prayers, lighting candles and preparing the hall. The learners use the school’s worship committee to discuss their views and expect members to ensure worship is meaningful and relevant; clergy and staff respond well to the pupils’ views. It is the variety and expectation which keeps worship as a key feature of the school day. The Parish clergy contribute significantly and are committed to the engagement of the learners which they do exceptionally well. The quality of singing and music is very good. The meaningful and relevant thoughts and prayers hold the attention of all who participate, including staff and learners. The focus on engaging and valuing learners’ thoughts, ideas and very good use of the excellent resources all serve to ensure collective worship is of outstanding quality.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

It is through the well planned and constructive teaching that learner’s are eager to explore different ideas and activities relating to the themes. In a lesson on the theme of Angels, learners were ‘buzzing’ when trying to unravel the conundrum of what is an angel. Resources and varied teaching techniques kept the learners of all abilities on task, clearly focussed and eager to explore different interpretations of angels in a variety of cultural styles. The swift and all powerful use of different questioning techniques engaged all the learners and gave them all opportunities to contribute to the total learning environment. Teachers use discussion techniques to very good effect and provide a range of interesting activities which offers all learners including those with additional needs the opportunity to express their opinions on modern day saints. The well executed scheme based on the Locally Agreed Syllabus which is nationally acclaimed, provides a clear and logical progression incorporating well the teaching and learning about other major faiths and traditions. By the end of Year 6 learners achieve standards above the national average. The co-ordinator manages his subject well, is supportive of all staff so that RE is an exciting subject to teach and to learn. Religious Education contributes significantly to the distinctiveness of this school. Interesting displays around all the school stimulate interest and discussion. The Children's worker uses puppets to good effect and enables younger learners to act out their interpretations of well known bible stories as one of the excellent extra lunchtime activities.

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

The leadership of this school is driven only by the commitment to sharing the school values based on Christ’s teaching with all who are part of its’ community. The school strives to ensure that learners have every opportunity to improve their already above average standards through the integration of all aspects of the curriculum which is lively and fully enriched by enthusiasm for learning about religion, culture, the creative arts, sport, knowledge of the world and the heritage which surrounds the learners. The Parish clergy and staff are very supportive of the school and are used very effectively to build the relationships between the school and the local community. The governing body which is federated with the church infant school is dynamic in supporting the ethos and achievements in the school. Recent changes in the leadership team have served to enhance the previous very good practice. The team constantly reviews and evaluates its work and is now leading the school onwards and upwards to even higher levels of achievement. Parents’ views and opinions are heard and recognised so improvement is owned by all the stakeholders in the school. Thoroughness and integrity is the key to the leadership team. All members of staff are valued and it is recognised that it is their exceptional skills which are vital; that they are the means to improving the performance of all the learners. The headteacher shows outstanding commitment to the core Christian values of the school and it is his professional thoroughness which is the key to making this school an excellent example of an outstanding church school.