

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St. Anne's Fulshaw, Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Nursery Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5JQ

Diocese: Chester

Local authority: Cheshire
Dates of inspection: 30th January & 5th February 2008
Dates of last inspection: 9th & 11th March 2004
School's unique reference number: 111287
Headteacher: Mrs Clare Hancock
Acting Headteacher: Mrs Penny Thomas
Inspector's name and number: Graham H Nuttall 456

School context

The school is smaller than average with most pupils being of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is low, whilst a below average number of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Due in part to short-term employment in the locality, the number of pupils entering and leaving the school part way through the academic year is much higher than normal. Whilst the majority of pupils live locally, around 25% travel some considerable distance to get to the school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Anne's as a Church of England school are good

St. Anne's has a sound Christian ethos. Pupils feel valued and secure; they enjoy school. Outstanding care is taken to nurture pupils' personal development and to provide extremely high levels of guidance and support. Parents feel that the school is highly effective. Links with the parish and local community are good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is broadly enhanced by collective worship, but not all worship integrates with the planned weekly theme.

Established strengths

- Exceptionally high levels of care and guidance for pupils within a welcoming and supportive ethos.
- Pupils feel valued, happy and secure in school and respond well to the challenges and expectations of staff.
- Secure links with the local church and community where church members actively support pupils and enhance the school's work.
- The commitment of the foundation governors and headteacher towards furthering the Christian foundation upon which the school is based.

Focus for development

- Ensure collective worship is continuously monitored in order to determine the impact upon pupils.
- Develop appropriate self-evaluation strategies in order to enhance the school's distinctive Christian character and ethos.
- Develop in-service training for all those involved in leading acts of worship.

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

The Christian ethos of the school is evident in the way everyone is treated. St. Anne's is a friendly school and meets the needs of learners well. The school demonstrates a well-ordered atmosphere within which pupils are quietly confident and keen to help one another. Relationships are of a high order and there is a genuine concern for others. The excellent provision of extra-curricular activities together with visits to places of interest and residential opportunities impacts strongly on pupils' social, spiritual, social and moral development. There is a total commitment to inclusiveness, for example, in the way pupils joining the

school during the academic year are warmly welcomed and fully supported. The school council ensures that pupils have a voice in “their” school, and together with play leaders and recycling officers, all help to impact upon school improvements. Everyone feels valued and their views are taken seriously. Parents speak confidently about how their children “blossom” and how they enjoy coming to school. They praise the family atmosphere and recognise that there is a strong sense of justice, equality and respect in the school. Older pupils are given additional responsibilities through helping younger ones and the way older and younger children get on with each other is commendable. Such opportunities impact directly on pupils’ social and moral development and give some excellent foundations for future social and civic awareness. Some wall displays based on work done in religious education (RE) and Christian artefacts found in communal areas help to emphasise the school’s distinctiveness and impact upon pupils’ spiritual development. Local and international charities are well supported; for example, Christian Aid, Unicef and the “send a cow” to Africa project. This type of activity gives pupils an excellent opportunity to understand world problems and to develop their cultural awareness.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Acts of worship are planned each day for all pupils, either as a whole school or as class worship. Services are held in the church weekly and staff, parents, foundation governors and members of the church community are invited to attend. Pupils know the clergy; they recall messages and stories and say they enjoy their visits. They appreciate the weekly input by the clergy and laity team, “we go to church to say thank you to God for all he has given us”. The parish organist leads a weekly hymn practice and this is to be commended, although sung praise was not included as part of the two acts of worship inspected. The planned key weekly themes should ensure continuity and a whole school focus, but class worship does not always integrate with the chosen theme for the week and thus worship themes are fragmented and the overall impact of worship on pupils is less effective. Achievements are celebrated within school assemblies ably supporting children’s self esteem. Worship offers a contribution towards the social, moral, cultural and spiritual development of pupils and account is taken of the needs of those from other or no faith backgrounds by inviting a response from the children which is appropriate to the occasion. Symbols such as a candle and appropriate music create a favourable atmosphere, however not all staff attend collective worship. As a result whilst most children are engaged, some pupils can be quite chatty when meeting as a large group. Anglican tradition is encouraged through the use of the Lord’s Prayer and short periods of reflection are built into some acts of worship. The school has devised a strategy for recording and evaluating the impact of collective worship on pupils’ understanding, but records have not recently been maintained.

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

The headteacher and her deputy know every child in school and their families. Parents speak very highly of the energy and encouragement of the staff. The senior management team values and nurtures everyone involved with the school resulting in high levels of collaboration and co-operation. Both the headteacher and the acting headteacher have worked very hard to ensure a highly effective level of provision through a period of challenging staffing problems due in part to staff on long-term sickness. There is sound evidence of the effectiveness and commitment of many staff, some of whom have gained leadership and management experience during this period. Foundation governors have an understanding of their role and speak about the Christian purpose of the school. The close working relationship between the headteacher, foundation governors and lay members of the parish helps to communicate the Christian vision of the school to all stakeholders. Links with the church are good and a committed team of clergy and laity play a prominent role in supporting school, children and families. The headteacher writes a monthly article for the parish magazine whilst parishioners hear children read and lead hymn practice. They see this as an important part of their ministry and witness. The school’s mission statement ‘to offer children an opportunity to learn in a safe, happy and supportive community’ is the central focus of the management team and is successfully achieved. The use of appropriate self-evaluation materials in order to determine the effectiveness of St. Anne’s as a distinctive church school is at a very early stage and has yet to be developed.