

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Augustine's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

St Augustine Street
Monsall
M40 8PL

Diocese: Manchester

Local authority: Manchester
Dates of inspection: 09.07.08
Date of last inspection: March 2004
School's unique reference number: 105490
Headteacher: Ms Cath Potter
Inspector's name and number: Barbara Kinch

School context

St Augustine's CE Voluntary Controlled Primary School is situated close to the city centre of Manchester in an area of significant social deprivation. The Income Deprivation Index ranks the ward in which the school is situated as second most deprived in England. There are many social challenges for the school to address which include high levels of unemployment, single parent families, domestic violence and drug and alcohol related crime. The attendant effects of these on the school community are poor physical and emotional health, high stress and low expectations. Although the community is predominately white, there are increasing numbers of pupils from ethnic minorities. The school holds awards for Healthy Schools, Manchester Inclusion Standard and Active Mark

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

The school ethos is good with some outstanding features. Christian values of Love, Hope and Forgiveness, identified by the school, underpin all aspects of its work. Caring and nurturing are exemplified in the very positive relationships which exist between all members of the school. The positive approach to achievement and enrichment is rooted in the belief that seeing and reaching potential is vital. High expectation and hope are outstanding as key features. Forgiveness forms the basis of the school's approach to behaviour management based on a clearly understood system and an acceptance of fresh starts

Established strengths

- A warm, welcoming and affirming ethos which lives out its Christian values of love, hope and forgiveness in overt and practical ways
- Strong, positive and clear vision led by the headteacher and supported by the senior management team and governing body
- Excellent relationships which are based on the development of high expectations and self esteem
- The provision of a wide range of enrichment opportunities for all pupils

Focus for development

- To celebrate the Christian distinctiveness of the school more fully in its own self evaluation
- To foster spiritual growth by developing opportunities for reflection in worship, classroom activities and other aspects of school life.
- To develop systems of monitoring and evaluating the ethos as well as worship and RE.

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

The impact of identified Christian values on policy and practice is good with some

outstanding examples. Children show good attitudes to school and to achievement, they enjoy coming to school, feel valued and listened to by all staff, they feel encouraged and have positive visions for the future. Most children said they like the work they are given because 'they do good things.' They respond well to each other and show care and support for children who have difficulties. The children's involvement in the behaviour policy is excellent and the 'traffic light' system which gives each child a fresh start is a concrete process by which they see that negative behaviour can be regulated and controlled. Golden time is also very important to them as a recognition of good work and behaviour. They have a keen sense of right and wrong, fairness and justice borne out by their acceptance of mistakes made and the place of forgiveness. The provision of enrichment opportunities and the involvement of external groups in school has a very positive impact on children's self-esteem and their social development. Members of HSBC staff who regularly visit school to act as 'Reading Buddies' also describe the positive and reciprocal effects this has on them. Parents value the school highly, saying that they feel everyone cares, that they do not focus on negatives and they feel that the school is always ready to offer support and advice and that good relationships are based on genuine respect. One parent said that '*...whatever the weather it always feels that there is a big sun over the school!*'

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

There is a comprehensive policy for worship which is inclusive and affirming of children of all faiths or none. Worship complements work done in RE, PSHE and links Christian values to SEAL materials. Children's spiritual development is enhanced by the worship themes. The worship observed centred around the idea of 'Can you put a price on love?' The children were involved from the outset and very responsive. They talked purposefully to the people around them including staff, who readily engaged with this issue. The atmosphere was calm, purposeful and the children were clearly comfortable and familiar with the approach, quickly focusing back to share ideas. The worship concluded with the song 'You are my brother' sung with enthusiasm and was totally appropriate to the theme. A child led the school in the Lord's Prayer which the children said with confidence. Pupils clearly have a good knowledge of Christian faith and worship. The opportunity for a moment's reflection was however missed, and this would have lent another dimension to the depth of the experience. One class had visited a Buddhist Temple and it was with some pride that I was told that they had been able to sit for 9 minutes in silence! The children particularly like the Celebration assembly and feel that it shows their work and efforts are valued and appreciated by everyone.

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

The headteacher has a clear vision in line with Christian values for the school and a deep understanding of the community issues and the way they impact on the children and their families. Parents value her compassion and positive attitude. They feel welcomed and 'supported 100%' by the school and recognise provisions made for them, for example through courses on parenting and behaviour management. The headteacher and the recently appointed RE coordinator are working to strengthen and develop the RE and worship more fully. The Governing Body nourish and support the Christian vision and are very committed to and involved in, the life of the school. They also understand local community issues and fully support the school in addressing needs and challenges. They are active in the school's self evaluation, offering support and an appropriate degree of challenge. The school has developed good links with the Diocese, for example, diocesan support was a valuable contribution during the recent issues the school faced regarding possible closure. The head teacher has made strong links with the Archdeacon and Cathedral and the appointment of a new incumbent later in the year is looked on positively as an opportunity to strengthen church links. The development of a cohesive policy for monitoring and evaluating the Christian ethos of the school would enhance the governors' role still further and ensure that the present vision is developed, sustained, fully embedded and celebrated in the school's self evaluation.

