

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **St David's Haigh & Aspull Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Copperas Lane

Haigh

Wigan

WN2 1PA

#### **Diocese: Liverpool**

Local authority:

Wigan

Dates of inspection:

12<sup>th</sup> December 2007

Date of last inspection:

15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> December 2003

School's unique reference number: 106519

Headteacher:

Mrs C L Boulton

Inspector's name and number:

Rev'd W Sloan 521

#### **School context**

St. David's is a smaller than average sized primary school. The school is situated in Haigh but draws its pupils from a wider catchment area with a diverse range of social and economic backgrounds. There are a small number of pupils from different minority ethnic groups, but the majority of children are of white British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The headteacher, deputy and some other staff have been appointed since 2005.

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

The Christian ethos quietly underpins the life of the school. Christian values of love, respect, forgiveness, reconciliation and compassion are demonstrated in action by all members of the school community. This has a positive impact on the spiritual and personal development of the pupils. Relationships throughout the school are outstanding. Strong links with the parish church and the community provide good support for the school's religious foundation.

#### **Established strengths**

- The strong Christian ethos which permeates all aspects of school life.
- The clear and effective vision of the headteacher and leadership team.
- The strong links and feelings of mutual respect between the school, the church and the wider community.
- The quality of the relationships between all members of the school community

#### **Focus for development**

- To involve the whole school community in the process of monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the school's Christian distinctiveness.
- Develop marking procedures in Religious Education that will support pupils in reflecting on their work and seeing how it can be improved.

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

All pupils are highly valued by a caring and committed staff. Christian principles and values permeate the whole life of the school and have a positive impact on personal development. These values can be seen clearly in the quality of relationships between the children, who support each other in both the classrooms and the playground. The 'buddy system' has the desired effect of enabling the younger pupils to settle quickly into school life whilst allowing the older pupils to take-on a responsibility that allows them to grow and mature socially in a commendable fashion. Annual 'Walking Days' enable the children to be involved publicly in the local church and to experience what it is to belong to a Christian community. This also

contributes well to their wider understanding and appreciation of the Christian faith. All adults in school are regarded as trustworthy and teachers are seen as being 'really happy and helpful' whilst 'making lessons fun'. Pupils feel safe therefore in turning to any adult in school with a problem. All relationships are outstanding. They are characterised by Christian care and concern for others and contribute to pupil's spiritual development. Pupils are especially polite, friendly and well behaved. Reward systems encourage good behaviour and contribute well to the pupils' moral development. Opportunities for prayer and reflection through collective worship, RE, lunch-time and at the end of the day support personal religious development and help to emphasise the importance of prayer in the school's life. Christian symbols are visible in all classrooms and good use is made by the school of the limited space in the entrance area to proclaim the school's Christian distinctiveness. Parents are very supportive and describe the school as 'such an inviting and friendly place with a very homely feeling'. They know that their children are very happy, valued by all the staff and thoroughly enjoy attending St David's.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.**

Worship occupies a central place in the life of the school and is a key element in its Christian witness. Acts of worship are very well planned by the staff, vicar and headteacher. They are the main leaders and follow well chosen themes. Pupils speak positively about worship and can retell their favourite stories and sometimes explain the meaning behind them. All children have their confidence and self-esteem boosted through good levels of participation. They take responsibility for leading the school prayer and the Lord's prayer which they do fluently. All acts of worship are received positively and seen as an enjoyable and uplifting start to each day. All teachers attend worship, thus reinforcing the importance of this shared time. The pupils are responsive and their behaviour is excellent. The head teacher and vicar lead the worship skilfully, involving the pupils through well directed questioning. Themes and teaching develops well the pupils' understanding of the Anglican tradition. There is a good variety of opportunities for pupils to be involved in the planning and delivery of acts of worship. The hall contains a small worship table with a cross on it, alongside a candle which is lit as a focal point. This reminds the pupils they have come into the hall to worship together. Worship is mainly whole school but once each week there are individual class based acts of worship. The governors participate in whole school and with individual classes in special acts of worship. The vicar leads the whole school act of worship in church on a monthly basis and at other times in school. This helps pupils gain a wider understanding of Christianity within the context of their local place of worship. There are very strong links with the local Anglican Church and members of the congregation and different church groups like, the Mother's Union. These opportunities for meeting and worshipping together, as school, church and community again widen pupils' understanding of the church and have a good impact on their spiritual development.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good.**

Religious education is an essential component of the whole school curriculum. This is actively and positively supported by governors, staff and parents. Teaching and learning is good. Pupils work willingly and respond readily with enthusiasm and enjoyment to the tasks presented. Relationships in all the classrooms are outstanding. Lessons are well planned and are supported by a comprehensive assessment process. Imaginative teaching, based on the Liverpool Diocese Syllabus, means that pupils enjoy RE. They are invited to tackle a good variety of tasks; many giving opportunities for them to express their ideas and thoughts individually. Because pupils know there is always time for their voice to be heard they are confident and enthusiastic about sharing ideas. During a lesson on the Christmas story, they successfully reflected on the shepherd's response when the angels appeared and again when they heard of the birth of Jesus. Pupils clearly enjoyed the lesson and talked enthusiastically about how they would have reacted. In another lesson the teacher helped them to understand how they could experience the presence of God. The pupils' responses included 'showing kindness to others'. Innovative teaching approaches allow pupils to focus in depth on these and other important themes. Lessons in both Key Stages make valuable links to other curricular areas. This allows skills gained in other subjects to be reinforced. The Year 6 pupils have an excellent understanding and knowledge of the Christian faith knowing who Jesus is and why he came. There is an appropriate emphasis on Christianity and

coverage of other faiths, together with good opportunities for reflection on spiritual and moral issues. Marking of pupils' work is not always focussed enough to help pupils reflect upon their work and know what steps to take to improve. Monitoring and evaluation of RE is carried out by the headteacher and RE co-ordinator and leads to a report for staff and governors that highlights strengths and weaknesses. These reports are well used helping the school to focus on areas to develop in order to bring about further improvement.

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

The headteacher and governors have a clear Christian vision for the school and are effective in developing and promoting its Christian ethos and character. A good team spirit exists within the school. The mission statement reflects clearly the Christian foundation and character of the school. The governors review the statement periodically seeking the views of the school community. This helps staff and pupils to feel they are part of a caring and supportive Christian community. Pupils and their parents speak appreciatively about the commitment of the staff to all individuals and the quality of education provided. Letters to parents, questionnaires and the work of the school council are all used to review the school's work and to inform future development. The school enjoys a close and productive relationship with the church and community. The PCC of St David's Church has strong pastoral and spiritual links with the school. They regularly pray for and visit the school. The school is discussed at each meeting of the PCC. The management of collective worship by the coordinator, vicar and headteacher has had a positive impact on the quality of provision and there is a clear view of how to develop it further. The school accurately identifies its general strengths through self-evaluation. Although the school staff and governors ensure the Christian character of the school is visibly displayed and features in school documentation and in other areas of school life the governors and headteacher and staff have not yet undertaken a formal evaluation of the distinctive Christian character of the school.

SIAS report [December 2007] [St David's Haigh & Aspull, Copperas Lane, Haigh, Wigan, WN2 1PA