

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St. James' Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Cromwell Range
Birch-in-Rusholme
Manchester

M14 6HW

Diocese: Manchester

Local authority: Manchester

Date of inspection: 30 September 2008

Date of last inspection: 1 November 2004

School's unique reference number: 105508

Headteacher: Mrs V Fitzpatrick

Inspector's name: Mr T Croasdale

School context

This average sized school lies about 3 miles from the centre of Manchester and serves a mixed area in which there is wide range of cultural and faith traditions. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Over 70% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and more than 50% of the school speaks English as additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and / or disabilities is below average but increasing.

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

All involved with St. James' are clear that it is a Church of England School and are proud to be a part of this tradition. There is an overwhelming desire to support all the children to achieve their potential and include them in school activities, which is a reflection of the school's value statement. An outstanding ethos which is warm, friendly and open to all pervades the school.

Established strengths

- Very good links with the local church and community.
- The school places inclusion at its core and goes to great lengths to ensure that members of all faiths are able to participate.
- The quality of relationships which exist between all members of the school community.
- Good quality teaching and learning in Religious Education

Focus for development

- To increase the involvement of all stakeholders in Collective Worship.
- To develop a process for the evaluation of Collective Worship.

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

Parents are very supportive of school and the attention which it gives to all children. Pupils are clear that they go to a Church of England School and know that it is different from other schools nearby. They are proud of the school and feel that they are well cared for and kept safe from harm. Pupils say that they know where to go if they feel sad or lonely. High quality relationships are a strength of this school and permeate throughout the whole school community. Taking part in charity fund-raising makes pupils very aware of the needs of others and the Christian responsibility to those in need. The school is fully inclusive and indeed the children are proud of the fact that school is made up of many cultures and faiths. Moral education is good with pupils treating each other with fairness and kindness. The

Christian foundation is demonstrated very well through the vibrant displays and also the emphasis which the school places on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children benefit from the spiritual opportunities in worship and are encouraged to use times of silence for reflection.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Children see collective worship as an important aspect of the life in their school. Pupils develop a clear understanding of Anglican faith and practice from collective worship. This is because the school maintains good links with the local church and the vicar is a regular visitor to school both to lead worship and also to observe and contribute to lessons. Their understanding of Christianity is deepened due to there being three Eucharistic services held each year with school celebrating in church on two occasions. School also celebrates the major festivals of the Christian year. During the Eucharist children are involved by leading prayers and sharing the peace in an inclusive manner. The children benefit from the spiritual opportunities in worship and are encouraged to use times of silence for reflection well. However there is the opportunity to develop worship further through a greater involvement with of all stakeholders including the governing body. Also, at the present time there is no consistent practice in the evaluation of worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Pupils enjoy their R.E. lessons and join in with enthusiasm and confidence, displaying good subject knowledge. Their books demonstrate a good range of coverage of different faiths, with Christianity having the main emphasis, in accordance with the Diocesan syllabus. Standards of work in R.E. are high throughout the school. The children show a good understanding of the Christian faith and also of Anglican traditions. Staff plan their lessons in detail from the syllabus enhancing it most effectively by incorporating active learning techniques. The school's emphasis on Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural learning is evidenced by the high standard of the children's behaviour and also the actions of older children in supporting younger children. During the period of inspection lessons were observed looking at other faiths and these showed that children's knowledge is good thanks to focused teaching and secure subject knowledge. During a Year 2 lesson the children were encouraged to engage with some very fundamental issues relating to the Christian faith which they did with commendable maturity. The children show a real enthusiasm for R.E. and can retell Bible stories and can explain what they mean.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is good with some outstanding features

The dedicated and experienced Head Teacher takes a clear lead in promoting the Christian ethos of the school within its wider faith communities. She demonstrates respect for people of all faiths, which sets a clear example for pupils to follow. She gains support from an equally committed governing body who, when time permits, do come into school to observe teaching and learning. The new RE subject co-ordinator has a clear vision for the future development of the subject. She already has begun to further develop the role of the co-ordinator through an audit of resources and monitoring standards and progress etc. It is recognised that collective worship as well as R.E. needs to be monitored and evaluated more closely and also that foundation governors as well as other members of the school community need to be involved in this exercise. Links with other agencies and organisations are good and make a significant contribution to the children's development. There are high levels of respect for different cultures and religions and as a result racial harmony is very strong and reflects the schools concern to take the lead in fostering community cohesion. Children are fully involved in the development of the school via the school council.