

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **St Mary, Redcliffe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Windmill Close,  
Windmill Hill,  
Bristol  
BS3 4DP

#### **Diocese: Bristol**

Local authority: City of Bristol

Dates of inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2007

Date of last inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2003

School's unique reference number: 109147

Headteacher: Mr N Isaac

Inspector's name and number: Mr D Shears (Inspector No. 423)

#### **School context**

St Mary Redcliffe is an urban school in the centre of Bristol City. It is built on a sloping site with a number of issues regarding its buildings. Many of the pupils are from ethnic minorities and a number of these do not have English as their first language. There has been a history of high pupil mobility. The school has links with both St Mary Redcliffe Church and St Michael and All Angels Church.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Mary's Redcliffe Primary as a Church of England school are satisfactory**

Pupils and parents are both very happy with the inclusive way in which St Mary's Redcliffe welcome them into the school community. There is a strong, caring ethos that enables all pupils to achieve well academically in relation to their individual ability. This positive atmosphere is not, however, always built on a distinctively Christian foundation, which can hinder the spiritual development of pupils and as yet there are no detailed plans for future improvement.

#### **Established strengths**

- There is a strong inclusive atmosphere that embraces pupils of all backgrounds and abilities
- Staff work hard to ensure that pupil's personal development is good
- Parents appreciate the support that they receive from the school

#### **Focus for development**

- Establish a distinctive Christian vision for the school that will inform its mission statement and aims..
- Promote pupil's spiritual development more effectively through lessons and displays.
- Ensure that Collective Worship is monitored and evaluated regularly.

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

St Mary's Redcliffe is truly an inclusive school. They warmly welcome pupils of all abilities and cultures and show them what it means to live in a caring community. Pupils enjoy coming to the school and making many friends from different backgrounds. One pupil remarked that this was a good thing because 'you can make friends that you wouldn't otherwise have known'. There have been a number of instances of bullying within the school but the pupils feel safe in the knowledge that any problems are quickly resolved. A display reminds them of what bullying is, what to do if it happens, who to tell and what will happen. Pupil personal development is very good. They are encouraged right from the nursery class to speak politely, remembering to say 'please' and 'thank you', contributing well to their social development. To support this, staff at the school treat pupils well by listening to them and willingly helping them

when they have any worries or concerns. There is a school council who make suggestions for improvements and raise money for charities. They encourage pupils to work hard and to co-operate with each other. The moral development of pupils is also good. There are golden rules displayed in each classroom; evidence of a whole school approach to positive discipline. The pupil's cultural development is particularly effective, through day to day contact with others of different backgrounds. They are learning to understand how others think and feel and this enhances their self-esteem. However, the school does miss opportunities to develop pupil's spiritual development both in lessons and the school environment. Pupils as yet are not aware enough of how to use faith to help them to make decisions about what they should do. The resources and accommodation do not sufficiently encourage pupils to engage in spiritual reflection, prayer or worship.

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

Collective Worship takes place in the school every day, either as a whole school assembly, as a key stage or in year groups. Teaching staff all take turns in leading worship and the themes are planned by the head teacher who co-ordinates worship. The planning details the content used for the lead assembly and gives ideas to staff for follow up possibilities. A good aspect of the planning expresses the learning intention for the theme. However, at present there is no formal monitoring or evaluation of worship which hinders any possible future development. There is a good Collective Worship Policy although it is not adhered to in practice. On the day of inspection the acts of worship were effective. Pupils came into the hall with a good sense of respect although there was no Christian visual focus at the front to suggest that they were coming to worship and pray together. In both acts of worship seen there was an appropriate story, one from the Bible and one a true story from the worship leader's own experience. In both cases there was a time of reflection at the end. Pupils know the school prayer although they were unaware of the Lord's Prayer. There was no opportunity for pupils to worship through singing, which limited their participation in worship. Pupils remarked, however, that sometimes they are noisy when arriving or leaving the hall. Observations showed that they are capable of being quiet and reflective but it lacks consistency and detracts from any spiritual awe and wonder. The school marks the major Christian festivals including Christmas and Easter and uses the local church for these events, to which parents are invited. The right of withdrawal is made clear in both the Collective Worship Policy and the School Prospectus.

### **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is inadequate**

Although the leaders of the school have ideals for the school being inclusive and supportive of pupils, this is not yet underpinned by a Christian vision. There are some general references to Christian values which, according to the majority of parents, the pupils had understood well. At present there are no monitoring or evaluation processes in place for its self-evaluation as a church school. There are some stronger links being made with both of the local churches and this has resulted in an inset day during the past year where the role of the church school has been discussed. The school improvement plan for 2006/7 now has an aim to develop their understanding of the status of a church school. However, there are no specific action plans as yet to suggest who is responsible or how this is to be achieved. Once there is a clearly understood Christian vision statement and aims that are shared by staff, the school will be able to make an impact on the spiritual development of pupils and raise the standard of Collective Worship, which currently is undervalued and needs development. RE is beginning to include the involvement of people from other faiths and denominations to enhance the experience for the pupils. The enthusiastic co-ordinator is due to visit schools in India to find out how faith schools operate and bring back new initiatives to St Mary's. Meetings of the governing body commence with prayer as befitting a church school. The foundation governors would benefit from some professional development to give them a good understanding of their role to support and challenge the school leaders about the Christian character of the school and the development of RE and Collective Worship. Then, together, the leadership and management of the school would be ready to monitor, evaluate and improve its Christian influence in the area in which it is situated.