

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Matthew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Mayo Avenue

Bankfoot

Bradford

BD5 8HT

Diocese:

Bradford

Local authority:

Bradford

Date of inspection:

10th October 2007

Date of last inspection:

June 2003

School's unique reference number:

107303

Headteacher:

Mrs Pat Idle

Inspector's name and number:

Ruth Packwood 524

School context

St Matthew's C of E Voluntary Controlled Primary School is an expanding school located near the centre of Bradford. The children who attend the school come from a wide range of cultures and ethnic groups, the predominant group being Asian or British Pakistani. English is not the first language of over 60% of learners. The area is gradually changing with high inward mobility. 75% of children are from Muslim backgrounds and a number of different faith groups comprise the remaining 25%. The school has had major building work over recent years to accommodate the additional children.

St Matthew's Church is at the other end of the parish. It is a 20 minute walk away and separated by two very busy dual carriageways.

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

The school is valued by children, parents, Governors and staff. It is a popular school in the local community with many parents making a positive choice to send their children to St Matthew's. Parents are aware that this is a church school with distinctive Christian values. They feel this has a positive impact on the school culture and this influences their choice to send their children here.

Established strengths

- The inclusive Christian ethos which values the contribution of each individual, develops positive behaviour, relationships, confidence and self esteem and promotes personal, spiritual and moral development
- Leadership and management's capacity to use school self evaluation to identify areas for further training and development
- Leadership and Management committed to the development of the school as a church school

Focus for development

- Implement plans to further develop the school environment to support pupils' spiritual growth
- Access training and support from appropriate bodies, including the diocese, to support the further development of strategies to enable the school to adjust to the changing population, in ways that are both distinctive and inclusive.
- Use outcomes of school self evaluation to support foundation governors in fully discharging their responsibilities and to enable the leadership and management team to further develop skills to effectively monitor and challenge the school's progress as a church school

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

The school effectively uses its Christian character to support pupils' personal, spiritual and moral development in ways which ensure that learners thrive, are happy and achieve well. Pupils are very positive about the school and are proud of the fact that they have won a lot of awards including Healthy Schools. Learning is interesting and challenging, as well as being fun. Pupils enjoy the responsibilities they have in school, as members of the school council, Buddies, or official helpers. Pupils' behaviour is positive, based on good relationships which enable them to develop good levels of confidence and self esteem. Pupils say that coming to a church school helps them 'to be kinder people' and 'to understand other's faiths'. They think this will continue to be important when they are adults. Pupils feel very safe and are sure that no one is made fun of because of their beliefs. They feel that provision made for pupils, especially during Ramadan, is helpful. Learners feel valued, know that their views are taken seriously and feel that any conflict is dealt with fairly. They like the way that there are good induction programmes for children who are new to the school and are aware of their responsibilities in helping children to settle in and learn English. The charity work the children are involved in is also linked to the concept of giving, caring and sharing in Christianity and in other faiths. Some displays promote the school's Christian character and the plans to work with an artist from St Matthew's church to enable children to design and plant a church garden will strengthen the potential of the school environment to further encourage spiritual development.

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

Vicar Alice has built up good relationships with the school over the past five years and is helping the leadership team to develop the distinctive and inclusive Christian character of the school. She leads a weekly act of collective worship which is distinctively Christian. Opportunities are provided for pupils to listen to and participate in singing the Gloria and in saying the Lord's Prayer as well as listening to and participating in the story and singing hymns. Parents of a small number of Muslim and Jehovah's Witness pupils have chosen to withdraw their children from this particular act of collective worship. During the rest of the week, a clear distinction is made between 'assembly' and collective worship. 'God's time' is distinct and marked by the lighting of a candle with time for reflection and prayer. Children look forward to collective worship time including 'song practice' and are confident to talk about their own faith without embarrassment. They were also able to articulate how moral lessons from Christian stories are mirrored in other faiths. One child likened 'Lead us not into temptation', from the Lord's prayer, to 'May God lead us in the right path to justice', from the Qur'an. Children visit the Church for a Christingle Service, and at Easter. Year 6 have their Leavers' service at the church. The Eucharist is not celebrated in school but Vicar Alice has run a 'Communion before Confirmation' class as an after school club. Christians from other countries and cultures lead worship on occasions and reflect the diversity of the school community. Collective worship is well-planned and regularly evaluated with plans that are annotated. Good records are kept and the reasons for changes that have been made are noted. Although the newly appointed foundation governors are not yet fully discharging their responsibilities in monitoring and evaluating collective worship, the collective worship policy is in place and records show that this is reviewed regularly by the Governing Body. Vicar Alice and other members of the leadership team are keen to access training to enable them to further develop an approach to collective worship which is both distinctive and inclusive, meeting the needs of all learners in this diverse school community.

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

The leadership and management of the school as a church school has been a clear focus of the Head Teacher and her Deputy over the past six years. Its Christian purpose is clearly expressed in its Mission Statement in the school prospectus. Vicar Alice has supported the school well over the past five years and has been Chair of Governors since September 2005. There are good links between school and church, school premises having been used for a baptismal service. Over the past eighteen months, the whole Governing Body has focused on its own development and Governors have had training on their role in holding the school to account. Governors monitor, support and challenge the school's progress in all areas, including as a church school and have identified that they need some external support to further develop their skills in this area. They are now discharging their duties more effectively in all aspects of school life. They have recently completed a self-evaluation exercise and as a result are developing an induction programme for all governors and another which will cover the induction of Foundation Governors in their specific roles and responsibilities. The Leadership and Management of the school are committed to developing a distinctive Christian vision for the school which serves a culturally diverse community. The Governing body reflects the cultural diversity of the school and all Governing body meetings start with prayer.

Parents feel that the school has a special quality that enables learners of all backgrounds to develop as individuals. Children feel that St Matthew's is a special place where they feel safe and they are respected as individuals.