

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St. Maxentius Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

New Heys Way
Bradshaw
Bolton
BL2 4AE

Diocese: Manchester

Local authority: Bolton
Dates of inspection: 22nd January 2008
Date of last inspection: 23rd and 24th June 2003
School's unique reference number: 105231
Headteacher: Mrs Clare Wilkinson
Inspector's name and number: Mrs Gillian M Rhodes

School context

St. Maxentius is an average sized school situated on the outskirts of Bolton. The socio-economic circumstances of the area are above average. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage. An extremely small proportion is from minority ethnic backgrounds. Eligibility for free school meals is low. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is increasing but is much lower than average.

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

St. Maxentius is a happy school which prides itself on being a Church of England school and which plays an important role in the local community. Links with the parish church and clergy are good. School worship takes place at the local church at key times in the Christian calendar and many families from the school are involved in parish life. Christian values are the foundation for the school's policies and are evident in relationships and conduct in school.

Established strengths

- St. Maxentius pupils and staff are proud of their school and are able to articulate what makes it distinctive as a Church of England school.
- Open and caring relationships demonstrate that the ethos of the school is founded in an explicit understanding of its Christian character and the positive values which are embedded in school practices and expectations.
- The overt recognition and promotion of the distinctiveness of the school as a Church of England school, good quality teaching and learning in Religious Education and the importance accorded to collective worship in the life of the school are the result of the effective leadership of the head teacher, senior leadership team and the RE co-ordinator, together with the support of the foundation governors.

Focus for development

- To involve all groups of stakeholders in the evaluation of the impact of collective worship on the school community.
- To ensure, through the drawing together of assessment information from each year group in a systematic whole school evaluation, the effectiveness of teaching and learning in Religious Education throughout the school.

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

Relationships between children, their families and the school are outstanding because staff work hard to ensure that in accordance with the Christian ethos of the school everyone feels valued and special. Children speak of their teachers and other adults in school as being kind and making learning enjoyable. They appreciate the support provided by the Learning Mentor

and the opportunity to express and address concerns using the 'Worry Wall'. The School Council ensures that the pupils play an effective part in the running of their school. They meet regularly, take responsibility for their own meetings, plan events which support community contribution and make decisions which improve school facilities and the social development of pupils. For example, money raised by the school's healthy Tuck Shop which is organised by the Council has been allocated following a Council vote to a Circus Skills day for all pupils. The moral and social development of pupils is good, enhanced by involvement in charity fundraising and demonstrated by their awareness of global issues and initiatives such as Fair Trade and Water Aid. Children understand their responsibility to care for God's created world. Their cultural awareness is good, highlighted by theme weeks such as China and India but awareness of local issues beyond the parish is not clearly evident. The school environment, both in classrooms and general areas, celebrates the school as a Church of England school through good quality displays which communicate faith knowledge, community responsibility, reflection and prayer.

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

The daily act of Collective Worship has a high profile in school life. Spiritual development is good because worship is carefully planned and engaged in actively by children and adults. On the day of Inspection worship was enhanced by pupils' musical contributions, drama and expressive singing of the hymn. The structure of the school day is punctuated by collective prayers, including a school prayer, and this reinforces the Christian character of the school effectively. Local clergy and lay parish representatives share in the weekly worship programme and this involvement is highly regarded by pupils and adults. Parents attend class worship on a regular basis and this enhances the profile of the school as the local Church of England school at the centre of the community. The worship programme is planned in careful detail by the Headteacher and RE Co-ordinator with clergy, teacher and pupil input. Evaluation of the impact of collective worship currently involves staff and foundation governors. Pupils express informally their positive views on collective worship but these views are not formally evaluated. The school prayer is clearly displayed, understood by pupils and used regularly in worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

Learners have a positive attitude to Religious Education and particularly enjoy the opportunity to think and exchange their personal ideas and beliefs with talking partners and in class discussions. A School Councillor said "There are no right or wrong answers but you have to be able to explain what you say." Learning about RE is good in all classes and outstanding in some. Pupils have a good knowledge of Christianity and other faiths in line with the Diocesan scheme. Learning from RE is at least satisfactory throughout the school, good in most classes and outstanding in some classes. This outstanding learning is due to the outstanding teaching which links RE knowledge to pupils' experiences, develops empathy in pupils and stimulates deep spiritual thought. Written evidence of standards and progress in learning about and through RE in pupils' exercise books also shows that standards are at least satisfactory in all year groups, good in most and outstanding in some. Learning in RE effectively promotes knowledge and understanding of the foundations of the school's Christian character. Children have a good knowledge of the Bible and the teachings of Jesus Christ.

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

The head teacher, leadership team and foundation governors demonstrate good leadership in their ability to articulate and share a vision of St. Maxentius C. of E. Primary School as a distinctive Church of England School. All staff are valued and work closely together to put the Christian vision for the school into practice. Children respond well to high expectations for good behaviour and mutual respect. The atmosphere in school is ordered and calm and pupils display a strong commitment to their work. The head teacher and RE co-ordinator monitor standards and progress in RE in each class and have a clear development focus in the evaluation of these standards and progress across the school. Evaluation of the impact of collective worship on the spiritual development of pupils is carried out by the head teacher and RE co-ordinator and impacts on future plans for worship.

Children express their opinions through the school council. The views of parents are sought through questionnaires and at formal and informal meetings. These views and opinions are considered and recognised as part of the school's development planning process.

SIAS report January 2008. St. Maxentius C. of E. Primary School, Bolton. BL2 4AE.