

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Stockport St George's Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School

Buxton Road,
Heaviley
Stockport.
SK2 6NX

Diocese: Chester

Local authority: Stockport

Dates of inspection: 6th March 2008

Date of last inspection: November 2004

School's unique reference number: 131306

Headteacher: Mrs Christine Buckley

Inspector's name and number: Miss Heather Starkie – NS 179

School context

This is a larger than average primary school situated within a socially deprived area close to the centre of Stockport. Pupils are predominantly of White British ethnicity and are from a range of socio economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school occupies three older buildings on a compact site. Governors and staff have worked hard to make effective use of space and have been successful in creating an attractive, stimulating learning environment.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St George's as a Church of England school are outstanding.

St George's is an outstanding church school. The headteacher and staff team are fully committed to promoting the Christian faith and are successful in embedding the Christian ethos within the daily life of the school. Christian principles and values are clearly reflected within the children's sensible behaviour and mature responses as well as their positive approaches and very good attitudes to learning. All children are valued and are made to feel special, as an individual made in the image of God.

Established strengths

- The strong, distinctive Christian ethos which underpins the work of the school and permeates all aspects of school life.
- The school's commitment to promoting the personal development and well being of each individual child.
- The clear vision of the headteacher and her commitment to promoting the Christian faith within the daily life of the school.
- The hard working and very committed staff team.
- Children's positive approaches to their learning and their good knowledge of and respect towards the Christian faith.

Focus for development

- Consider ways in which children can become more involved in the planning, leading and evaluation of worship.
- Refine school self evaluation procedures in order to involve governors, children and parents in evaluating the school's distinctiveness and effectiveness as a church school.

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

The strong distinctive Christian ethos is at the very heart of school life and contributes significantly to the all round development of each individual child. Displays around school portray very well the message that the school has a strong Christian foundation. Religious

education and worship displays are evident in all classrooms with prayers, sentences and questions which allow children to think and to reflect, thus promoting their spiritual development. All relationships within the school community are characterised by Christian love, care and respect for others. Staff provide good role models and work hard to encourage all children to develop as individuals. The effective "Building Learning Power" programme enables all children to have the confidence to become independent and to achieve their full potential within a supportive Christian environment. Children's personal development and well being are outstanding. The school is fully committed to the Every Child Matters agenda and prides itself on the excellent pastoral care and support it provides. Christian principles and values are promoted extremely well through the personal, social and emotional development of the children using the Social, Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme. Children enjoy school and are happy at school. They feel valued and special. Their work and achievements are celebrated within the regular "Sharing Assemblies". Behaviour is outstanding. The children organise a range of fundraising activities on a regular basis, in support of local, national and worldwide charities. This enables them to show respect and consideration towards those who are less fortunate. Recent projects have included raising money for "Wellspring", a charity for the homeless in Stockport. Children's spiritual development is outstanding. Many opportunities are provided for children to experience times of stillness and quiet and to reflect, across all curriculum areas. Prayer is a particularly important feature of school life. Prayers are said at significant times within the school day. Prayer boxes in all classrooms enable children to contribute their own personal prayers. Children's cultural development is good. Children show respect and empathy towards people of other cultures and other world faiths. The school has developed links with a school in Sri Lanka. Children are aware of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith and are aware of the importance of Christianity in other parts of the world.

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

Worship has a significant impact in promoting the Christian character of the school and in developing children's knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. Worship is an important feature of school life and is respected and enjoyed by the children and all members of the school community. The headteacher, who is also the worship co-ordinator, has a very clear vision of the role of prayer and worship within school. Worship is planned following distinct Christian themes with reference made to stories from both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Themes within the SEAL programme are also used and have been adapted to ensure there is a very explicit, Christian focus. Worship provides children with a range of experiences. There is an effective balance between whole school worship and key stage worship in order to meet the needs of learners of a range of ages and abilities. Worship observed within the inspection had a positive impact on children's spiritual development. Effective use was made of quiet, reflective music and within key stage one worship the children sang "O Lord hear my prayer" as a time of individual quiet reflection. During worship children listen attentively and their responses are relevant and thoughtful. They respond well to prayers and sing with enthusiasm and clarity. The school has excellent links with the local church. The clergy are very supportive and lead key stage worship in church each week. School also attends church to celebrate the main Christian festivals. In partnership with the church special weeks and weekends have been organised where the school family and church family join together to share and to celebrate the Christian faith.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding.

Religious education (RE) is seen as a high priority within the school and is regarded as a core area of the school's curriculum. Children demonstrate a good knowledge of the Christian faith and are able to express their understanding in articulate and thought provoking ways. They enjoy RE and have positive attitudes towards their lessons. RE is taught in a range of creative ways including drama, shared discussion, role play and practical activities. Effective use is made of ICT to support teaching and learning. Lessons observed within the inspection were fun and interactive. Within key stage one, children explored the feelings of the characters within the Palm Sunday story. Within key stage two, excellent questioning skills were demonstrated. Children were encouraged to reflect on ways in which Jesus' teaching affects the way in which we live our lives. Children make good progress within RE across

both key stages. Standards of attainment are in line with standards achieved in other core areas of the curriculum. Good standards of written work are produced. Staff have high expectations and children take pride in their work. This was clearly evident within the key stage two lesson observed during which children had to write a letter to a friend persuading them to accept God's invitation to follow Jesus' teachings within their own lives. Procedures for assessing children's work are in place and are used effectively. The school encourages children to become involved within their own assessments, enabling them to understand the level they are working at and what they need to do in order to improve. Effective monitoring and evaluation of RE takes place as part of the school's self evaluation procedures. Studies of other world faiths are incorporated into units of work within the RE curriculum, enhancing children's knowledge and understanding of other cultures and traditions.

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

The headteacher has a clear, distinctive Christian vision and is fully committed to promoting the Christian ethos and the Christian character in all areas of school life. She is very well supported by an effective deputy headteacher and a strong staff team who feel valued and who share her Christian vision and sense of purpose. A very good team spirit exists which enables staff, children, governors and parents to feel they are part of a caring, Christian community. The school's mission statement and the school motto encompasses the Christian foundation and work of the school. A new vision statement has recently been formulated, clearly reflecting Christian principles and values of love, care, forgiveness and respect towards others. An evaluation of the school's distinctiveness and effectiveness as a church school has been undertaken by the headteacher and leadership team. Outcomes of this evaluation have been shared with staff and areas for further development have been incorporated within the school's action plans and school improvement plans. Governors are extremely supportive of the headteacher and her commitment to ensuring the Christian faith is reflected and promoted within the daily life of the school. They are involved in whole school self evaluation and are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in the development of the Christian foundation and in evaluating the effectiveness of the school as a church school. Parents are very supportive and speak highly of the way in which the school promotes Christian principles and values. They also appreciate the way in which the school provides a caring, Christian environment where their children are happy and enjoy learning. There is an established and very effective school council which enables the leadership team to gather the children's views. Children feel their suggestions are valued and are taken seriously. Representatives currently serving on the council are articulate and make important and worthwhile contributions to the further development of the school.