

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **St. Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Alexandra Street  
Farnworth  
Bolton  
BL4 9JT

**Diocese: Manchester**

Local authority: Bolton M B  
Dates of inspection: 16th November 2007  
Date of last inspection: 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> November 2003  
School's unique reference number: 105239  
Headteachers: Mrs L Williams/Mrs S Charlton  
Inspector's name and number: Graham H Nuttall 456

#### **School context**

Many of the pupils in this smaller than average school live in areas with high levels of socio-economic disadvantage. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is close to the national average. The school is led by two headteachers in a co-headship situation. A new deputy headteacher took up appointment at the beginning of the Autumn term 2007. The school holds the Bolton Healthy Schools award, Investors in People and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Peter's as a Church of England school are good**

An ethos based on an explicit and clear vision of its Christian foundation underpins the positive values and attitudes embedded in the school. The dynamic leadership of the co-headteachers ensures that the school is successful in creating a friendly, caring Christian environment where everyone is valued. Pupils make very good personal development as a result of outstanding levels of care, guidance and support. Parents feel the school is highly effective as a church school.

#### **Established strengths**

- Outstanding leadership of the co-headteachers and the ambitious development aspirations of the school leadership team.
- High quality acts of collective worship which impact directly upon pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Expressions of the Christian ethos which are explicit in all aspects of school life.
- High quality relationships within the school which contribute to the exceptional quality of care and guidance for all pupils and their families

#### **Focus for development**

- Develop an assessment system for Religious Education ensuring that it dovetails with the whole school approach for tracking pupils' progress.
- Evaluate the recently published Diocesan scheme of work and adopt in accordance with school requirements and needs.

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

The distinct Christian ethos of the school is evident in the way everyone is treated. Pupils at St. Peter's experience high quality care in a welcoming and supportive Christian atmosphere. Classrooms are bright, stimulating places where Christian symbolism is overtly displayed alongside work based on Religious Education (RE). All pupils feel valued and staff have built up positive relationships with pupils and their families. Parents trust the school to care for their children. Pupils who have experienced difficulties in their lives know that the school is a place where their feelings and emotions are handled with tact and diplomacy. Rules are applied consistently by staff and pupils understand and accept the clear parameters set for

them. As a result there is a calm working atmosphere. The School Council ensures that they have a voice in the running of "their" school. They are keen to take responsibility for jobs and make a good contribution to both the school and the local community. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. They are keen to help one another and support numerous local and national charities. Pupils develop confidence and a high quality of self-esteem because of the trust and responsibility the school gives them, for example through the "buddy system". Older pupils write their own prayers, thinking of those less fortunate than themselves and become friends of Jesus. Children benefit considerably from the work of a Church Army sister who visits the school regularly and organises a 'holiday club' during Holy Week and the summer break. Pupils develop tolerance and respect for each other and for adults as a result of the celebration of achievement in all aspects of school life. Staff work collaboratively and co-operatively with each other. They talk openly about the way their faith impacts upon their professional life.

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

The daily period of collective worship is important in the life of the school and is based around sound Christian principles. Pupils make good spiritual growth because the worship reinforces Christian teachings and values. On the day of the inspection Year 5 pupils led the worship with confidence. Highly effective periods of reflection are built into worship. Pupils are reverent and make appropriate responses in their prayers. They think worship is important, "it's when we can talk to God". Pupils value and gain a good understanding of Christian beliefs, stories and worship from a Church Army worker. Positive role models from all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, ensure a high standard of discipline and behaviour. Pupils make good moral, social, spiritual and cultural development because class prayers and periods of reflection effectively support class worship and because all classrooms have a dedicated area for personal reflection. These areas provide a centre of focus when worship is classroom based and also when pupils wish to experience a period of quietness during their busy day. Pupils speak with tremendous pride about their own prayer books. The termly themes help pupils to focus on Christian values, but there is no overall planning of sub-themes for each week.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Religious education is a high priority within the life of the school and is clearly identified within the school improvement plan. Standards of teaching and learning overall are good. Pupils respond well to the challenges and demands placed upon them as a result of teachers' effective questioning techniques and open-ended discussions. Children are good at discussing quite complex issues towards the later stages of Key Stage 2 although their writing skills within the subject are not so well developed. Children make good progress because of some well-planned lessons. Pupils are keen to offer opinions, yet they listen with increasing maturity to the views of others. Good use is made of the Diocesan scheme of work and there are effective links between RE and PHSE. Pupils are developing a good knowledge of Christianity and some insight into other world religions. The school demonstrates a strong commitment to inclusion, with pupils recognising the need for respect and tolerance towards each other and differing faith communities. The recently appointed subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and is developing her role extremely well. She has already identified that governors now need to evaluate and appropriately adopt the recently revised Manchester Diocesan scheme. The monitoring and assessment of pupils' work is currently at an early stage. A plan to develop an assessment strategy in RE should be devised and implemented. It ought to also dovetail in with the whole school approach for tracking pupils' progress.

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

The personal commitment and dynamic leadership of the co-headteachers contribute to the success of the school as a church school. The happy working atmosphere and welcoming environment reflect the headteachers' 'people friendly' approach. The Headteachers and their management team fully realise the many challenging issues facing the school and they work exceptionally hard to successfully sustain school improvement, support families and raise levels of self-esteem amongst children. The headteachers and staff are now in a very good position to enrich the school even further. All staff feel involved and appreciated, for example, through involvement in training concerning the school's distinctive Christian character, and relationships between all members of the school community are of a high

order. The school's Christian purpose is clearly expressed within its Mission statement and prospectus. Foundation governors recently worked hard in order to assess the distinctiveness of the school as a church school utilising the National Society's self-evaluation materials. They are supportive in their day-to-day management roles but should now demonstrate a much closer involvement by assisting the Headteachers to implement their strategic vision for school development as a church school. A significant number of parents recognise that the school has a distinctive Christian ethos and they are happy to support this, realising the positive effects this has on their children's overall development.

SIAS report Nov 2007. St. Peter's C E (VA) Primary School, Farnworth, Bolton BL4 9JT