

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Wigan St. Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Mort Street
Springfield
Wigan
WN6 7AU

Diocese: Liverpool

Local authority: Wigan

Date of inspection: 9th April 2008

Date of last inspection: May 2004

School's unique reference number: 106449

Headteacher: Mrs Wendy Massey

Inspector's name and number: Graham H Nuttall 456

School context

This average sized school is close to Wigan town centre. Children come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Pupils are mainly of White British heritage with only a small number from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals are below average, whilst the number with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school has gained the Activemark. The headteacher was appointed in Autumn 2006.

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

An ethos based on a well-articulated and clear vision of its Christian foundation underpins the positive values and attitudes embedded in the school. It has successfully created a friendly and caring environment where everyone is highly valued. Very good relationships develop in a secure family atmosphere. Pupils' personal development is good as a result of outstanding levels of care, guidance and support. Links with the local church and community are very strong.

Established strengths

- A highly effective leadership team that has a clear Christian vision in respect of the development of the school.
- High quality relationships throughout the school community which contribute to the exceptional quality of care and guidance for all pupils and their families.
- Quality acts of collective worship which impact positively on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The mutually beneficial and strong links between the school, church and local community.

Focus for development

- Establish strategies to monitor and evaluate the quality and impact of religious education and worship.
- Include all stakeholders in the self-evaluation process to evaluate the effectiveness of the school as a distinctive church school.
- Develop further innovative ways of delivering the RE curriculum through sharing good practice and providing in-service training.

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

The school's purpose is expressed boldly in its mission statement: "As a Christian school we look to Jesus as our role model, follow His example, being patient and respecting others both

within school and the community.” When this is put into practice pupils experience a high quality of Christian care in a welcoming, friendly and supportive atmosphere. All feel safe and secure and their behaviour and manners are exemplary. Relationships are of a very high order and there is a sincere concern for others. Children feel valued and staff have built up positive relationships with pupils and their families. A Year 6 child commented, “I know I am valued at school because my teachers are polite and understanding.” Parents trust the school to care for their children. The excellent provision for extra-curricular activities has a positive impact on pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school demonstrates a strong commitment to inclusiveness as witnessed by the support given to a small number of children recently arrived from Eastern Europe. Pastoral care and personal support are strengths of the school and parents are keen to praise how hard the school works to look after their children. A small altar in the entrance foyer, wall displays and Christian artefacts are found in many communal areas of the school. These strongly emphasise the school’s distinctiveness and enhance pupils’ spiritual development. Parental questionnaires and the energetic and enthusiasm of the school council ensures all stakeholders are able to accept responsibility to improve “their” school. The dedicated parish priest ably supports the school, children and families; he sees this as an important and integral part of his ministry. Good ecumenical links with the Wigan Church Partnership broaden pupils’ understanding of the national and worldwide Christian community. Children take a leading part in the Christmas and Easter drama presentations staged in Wigan town centre. The outstanding programme of study held in church during Holy Week gives pupils opportunities to ask questions of both clergy and laity and helps their understanding of the Christian faith. Numerous charities are well supported. Children took responsibility for making the decision to support the Ruiru orphanage in Kenya and the USPG ‘Seeds of Hope’ campaign. This type of activity gives them excellent opportunity to understand world problems and to develop a wider cultural awareness. Many parents chose to send their children to the school because of its Anglican distinctiveness and they appreciate the way in which their children are guided and supported. They readily affirm that the school provides their children with firm foundations and gives them a strong sense of identity.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The daily period of collective worship is a very special part of the day in the life of the school. The activity is based on very sound Christian principles and is well led. The highly effective use of music, singing and drama enables each child to take part and enjoy the experience of worshipping God. They are very confident when taking part and talk openly about how they enjoy and benefit from being involved. They say, “worship is important because it helps us to become better Christians.” Positive role models from all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, ensure a high standard of behaviour. There is an atmosphere of reverence, with children making appropriate responses in their prayers. Evidence from published church services held at major Christian festivals indicates that Anglican traditions are particularly well supported. Well-planned liturgical themes together with thoughtful and structured periods of reflection ensure that worship has a positive impact on pupils’ spiritual and moral development. The weekly theme helps them focus on Christian values. They are able to consider the personal strengths and attributes required to tackle the problems and difficulties of life. Achievements are celebrated within school assemblies and this ably supports children’s self-esteem. The monitoring and evaluation of worship is currently at an early stage of development.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

Effective use is made of the diocesan syllabus. The recently appointed enthusiastic and dynamic co-ordinator has undertaken significant professional development herself. As a result she is able to support staff successfully and provide up-to-date resources. Class teachers have risen well to the challenge of teaching Religious Education (RE) for themselves. This is an improvement on previous practice when one member of staff taught all RE across the school. A range of teaching methods ensures that children have opportunity to learn in a variety of ways. Role-play, co-operative and collaborative discussions and practical activities all make learning interesting and fun. Good cross-curricular themes have been developed encouraging pupils to appreciate the breadth of RE and its close links to art, poetry, music, drama and science. Christian values are clearly expressed and children’s emotions are developed successfully as a result of some effective

teaching. Standards are broadly in line with national expectations. Marking of work is insufficiently developed and does not always indicate how children can extend their written responses to improve their work in future. There are currently no formal strategies to monitor and evaluate the quality and impact of RE. This aspect has been identified as an area for development within the school improvement plan for 2008/09.

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

The headteacher and her recently appointed senior management team promote strong and highly effective leadership. The happy working atmosphere and welcoming environment reflect the headteacher's dynamic and friendly approach. An ethos of trust, support and corporate responsibility has been established. Relationships between all members of the school community are of a high order. All members of staff recognise the challenging issues facing the school and they work exceptionally hard to sustain school improvement, raise levels of self-esteem and support families. All staff feel involved and appreciated as seen by their involvement in training concerning the recently published diocesan syllabus for RE. The headteacher and staff are now in an exceptionally strong position to enrich the school even further. Successful pastoral and spiritual links between the parish and school help to promote the shared vision. The school leadership team has clear plans and targets for future improvement. There are particularly strong partnerships with neighbouring schools, colleges and local organisations. Parents recognise that the school has distinctive Christian qualities and they speak with pride about the way their children are respected and valued. They know their views will be taken seriously and considered carefully. Foundation governors are very much aware of their specific role with regard to the school's distinctiveness and offer a breadth of experience. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and are supportive, yet challenging. The school recently utilised self-evaluation materials to determine its effectiveness as a church school, but the process did not include all stakeholders.