

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### Winwick Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Myddleton Lane

Winwick,

Warrington

Cheshire

WA2 8LQ

**Diocese:**

**Liverpool**

Local authority:

Warrington

Dates of inspection:

6<sup>th</sup> May 2008

Date of last inspection:

1998

School's unique reference number: 111365

Headteacher:

Mr. Graham Martin

Inspector's name and number:

Mrs. Barbara Horsfall - 434

#### School context

This is a smaller than average primary school serving the semi-rural village of Winwick and the surrounding area. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage and come from diverse social and economic backgrounds. Those pupils entitled to free school meals are below average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The school is undergoing extensive refurbishment of some classrooms, offices and the entrance area.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Winwick Primary School as a Church of England school are good

The outstanding links with the local church and a strong Christian ethos of care and respect impact on the whole school family's life and work. Pupils are well supported in their personal development and develop a clear understanding of the Christian religion. Well planned acts of worship and good RE lessons help them make significant progress in their spiritual, social and moral understanding.

#### Established strengths

- Excellent links with the local church and community;
- Good provision for personal development, whereby pupils know they are respected and so become confident and happy in school;
- The ability of many pupils to consider profound issues thoughtfully, to ask questions and debate in a very mature manner.

#### Focus for development

- Devise strategies to involve the whole school community more closely in self-evaluation processes which relate to the school's distinctive Christian character;
- Undertake a planned audit of standards in religious education and collective worship;
- Redefine and implement the school's Christian and Anglican identity philosophically and visually once the major building project is completed.

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

Pupils feel valued for their opinions as individuals and are well supported as they make good progress in their personal development. They feel happy and enjoy their work. Christian values have a positive impact on their progress in spiritual development. Older children are able to discuss difficult Christian concepts such as the 'Holy Spirit' and describe how, 'It inspires people and gives hope where there's doubt'. Pupils and staff show great concern for community needs. This is expressed through their work in making a church guide for other children to use. The exercise also helped those involved to develop a deeper understanding

of Christian symbols and the Anglican heritage for themselves. Frequent fundraising events for Christian charities, such as Operation Christian Child, shows concerns for those beyond their own community as well. Parents support the outstanding links with the parish church and are very happy with their children's personal development. Evidence of the Christian character of the school is displayed in some areas, but should be extended to all classrooms and include further opportunities for pupils' spiritual development. The major building programme has been detrimental to the overall impact of visual opportunities that enhance learning about religious issues. When the building is complete, the school needs to see that its plans to define and implement philosophical and visual strategies to express its Christian and Anglican identity clearly and coherently are put into place.

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

Worship is important to the school and underpins its Christian character well. Pupils are stimulated to think about key Christian concepts of belief and its expression in action during this time. This helps them to make constructive gains in their spiritual development. They behave respectfully and are challenged to continue to reflect on their learning during the rest of the day. Different aspects of the curriculum are used to effect to stimulate religious thinking in worship. This was illustrated well when scientific principles were used to illustrate that the 'Holy Spirit needs feeding within us, just as a candle needs air to burn'. Pupils answer questions in a thoughtful manner and some older ones have the confidence to pose further questions that challenge even deeper thinking. Members of staff play an active role as worshippers and leaders which supports children's good responses. The variety of settings offered for worship further enhances pupil's positive attitudes and children regularly take part. Pupils use liturgical greetings confidently and the Lord's Prayer plus a good variety of hymns are used well to develop an understanding of the Anglican heritage. Links with the parish church are outstanding. Older pupils are involved in weekly Eucharistic celebrations. This enhances their spiritual understanding and personal development very well. Many children are confirmed and take part in a service each term as part of the church congregation. This unites pupils with the church family. Parish clergy also lead worship in school each week cementing the school/church link. Acts of worship are carefully planned and informally evaluated by the headteacher with staff and the clergy. The school improvement plan for next school year is justified in highlighting action to undertake an audit of standards in collective worship and so develop more formal procedures.

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

Standards of attainment in RE are good and comparable to those in other core subjects. Progress is good overall across both Key Stages. Pupils enjoy RE and older children understand the relevance of topics to their own lives. Lessons inspire and provoke thoughtful responses. Pupils discuss beliefs with a keen interest and good understanding. They sometimes challenge responses maturely by asking searching questions about moral and spiritual issues. Older children were observed reviewing their knowledge about 'Faith' and pondering over one pupil's challenging question, 'Why do we pray if He's not human?'. Effective use is made of the parish church and cathedral to support the curriculum and give pupils a good grasp in understanding the significance of different elements of the Anglican tradition. Other people's beliefs and cultures are respected and valued. Families with different beliefs are invited to talk to the children. This enables pupils to make comparisons and define differences with their own faith. They ask questions such as 'Are the gods of other faiths the same as our God?' which helps to develop their personal philosophical and religious stance. Assessment informs teachers' planning well. The headteacher, as temporary subject leader, has monitored standards of achievement and highlighted a need to challenge pupils' development in Years 3 and 5. His action plan aims to promote better use of ICT to enhance the quality of teaching and learning and also to develop the use of targets which support pupils' development. The school has faced difficulties with RE subject management over three years due to staffing problems. During next year plans are in place to appoint a subject leader who will lead an audit and plan action to raise standards in RE during the next school year.

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

The headteacher, staff and governors articulate a clear Christian vision for the school that is rooted in biblical teaching: 'the child will grow in mind, body and spirit'. Members of staff are confident and comfortable about developing this shared vision. They are all very well supported in their personal spiritual development by prayer and special services at the local church. A celebration of the Eucharist takes place for all staff and governors at the start of the school year and the headteacher is a member of the church council. The Christian foundation is integral to the process of staff appointments and is an important focus in the performance management policy. Staff and governors are directly involved in the creation of all policies and they determine the priorities for improvement following evaluation of the school's development. They value the partnership and support from the local Diocese which helps them to evaluate standards and develop good strategies to improve the accommodation, work and worship of the school. Relationships between different members of the school community are good. Parents feel confident in articulating that the school is 'a happy place'. The school enjoys the active, regular and informal support of the parish church, parents and wider community, through meaningful involvement in the school and village life. Foundation governors support the headteacher very well, contributing significantly to the success of the school through close partnership, however, the involvement of all the school's stakeholders in being 'critical friends' when examining the school's distinctive character, has not yet been tackled in a systematic manner.

SIAS report May 2008 Winwick Church of England Primary School WA2 8LQ