



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Union Road,
Rochdale
OL12 9QA

Diocese: Manchester
Local authority: Rochdale
Dates of inspection: 9th May 2014
Date of last inspection: April 2009
School's unique reference number: 105807
Headteacher: Judith Rainford
Inspector's name and number: Ruth Wall (548)

School context

St. Andrew's is smaller than the national average-sized primary school. It serves a widespread community from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. There are an increasing number of children on roll and building work is currently underway to further increase class sizes, along with the addition of a nursery class. The proportion of disabled children and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is well below average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is average. Since the previous inspection a new headteacher has been appointed and there have been a number of governor and staff changes.

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

- The headteacher leads with vision and has succeeded in embedding Christian values within the daily life of the school.
- Christian values are clearly expressed and demonstrated by children and staff and underpin the positive relationships between all members of the school family.
- Relationships with St Andrew's Church are very strong in promoting a shared Christian vision for development and learning.

Areas to improve

- Undertake a review of the mission statement involving the whole school family that encapsulates the Christ centred ethos.
- Make explicit in school policies and statement of aims the distinctively Christian values of the school and how these determine practice.
- Leaders and governors to work together to introduce a more robust and structured approach to the self-evaluation of church school distinctiveness and effectiveness, ensuring that any issues which arise form part of the school's strategic planning.

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

Respect, honesty, friendship and forgiveness are the four Christian values which have been selected by the school community as a focus for their school. A teacher explained that they are 'a constant current through school, underpinning our lessons, conversations and reflections.' Examples are given by parents of their children demonstrating their understanding of these values at home. The values are displayed around the school and used for reflection and, very successfully, in emphasizing expected high standards of behaviour. In response to a request by a Reception child they are also displayed in their outdoor play area. Staff are excellent role models and agreed with one teacher who said that they are a 'close-knit team who work together in a calm, caring and warm environment where children feel safe and at ease.' The Christian character of the school is clearly defined and promoted effectively so as to make a significant impact on the personal development and academic needs of the children. The school uses data very well to track children's achievement and put in place intervention strategies to ensure they achieve challenging targets. Achievement and rates of progress are good. Through a range of activities, including their link with a church school in Namibia, children are made aware that Christianity is a global world faith. They understand the need to help others less fortunate than themselves through their Christian service. The strong link with St Andrew's Church enables children to have positive views of the role of the Christian church within the community. The school is both distinctive in its Christian character and inclusive in its approach to diversity. As a result it is a highly cohesive community in which all feel valued regardless of ability or faith. Religious Education (RE) makes a significant contribution to the Christian character of the school and is enjoyed by the children. They eagerly shared their knowledge of other faith traditions and the ways in which faith influences their daily lives. They are encouraged to ask challenging spiritual questions and understand that there is not always an answer.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Children and adults recognise that worship is central to the life of the school. It is well planned to cover Christian themes, with a strong emphasis on Christian values and key Christian festivals. Children understand the place of Jesus within the Christian faith. They also describe how certain themes, such as the resurrection of Jesus, shape their thinking on deeper issues, for example an understanding of God as Trinity. Worship always includes a time for quiet reflection and personal prayer which the children respond to respectfully. The headteacher explained that to guide children through difficult times she is beginning to introduce quotes from the Bible for children to learn. All teachers and older children enjoy taking an active part in leading worship which reinforces its importance to the whole community. At the present time, leaders from different Christian traditions are not involved in school worship. The worship observed was a joyful occasion with the school community clearly delighted as they celebrated children's efforts, learning, attitudes and achievements. A teacher praised one child for demonstrating the Christian value of friendship. Prayerful reflection focussed on thanking God and prayers for those in school, at home, in government and in other parts of the world, concluding with everyone confidently saying the Lord's Prayer together. Alongside the prominent worship table, two attractive prayer trees display children's own personal prayers. The vicar is a welcome and familiar presence in the school. Her regular contributions to worship and RE are very much appreciated and valued by the school community. She said she is 'blown away' by the worship observed in school. As one child put it, 'She listens and helps us understand'. Significant Christian festivals are celebrated in St Andrew's Church which parents said both they and the children look forward to. Of particular note was the 'Easter Experience' week of activities. A participating governor explained that she was 'amazed' by the children's insightful response to the symbols and that it was a 'wonderful spiritual experience for everyone.' Leaders acknowledge the need to create

portfolios of evidence to celebrate the quality of worship and to further develop evaluation procedures which will lead to informed school improvement.

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

The headteacher has set a clear direction for the school based on Christian principles and values. Staff and governors fully support this and are able to articulate how their school is distinctive as a church school with values firmly based on the teachings of Christ. Leaders and governors recognise the importance of the school's Christian character in creating an ethos which supports effective learning and their commitment to promoting equal opportunities. Two additional leadership posts have been created to ensure that children are nurtured effectively. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school and use their various skills to very good affect. They understand the need to develop a more robust and structured approach to their self-evaluation of the school as a church school and to undertake a review of the mission statement and aims which involves the whole school community. Parents recognise and support the distinctive Christian nature of the school, the importance of which is made very clear by the headteacher and vicar when they first visit the school. They share their experience of the school with enthusiasm and affection. The school has strong and supportive links with the local church and community which, one teacher noted, 'breathes further life into our school'. A teacher is currently undertaking training in preparation for taking on the leadership of religious education (RE). He is demonstrating enthusiasm and commitment in up-to-date research which, he explained, 'underpins our development in adapting the new diocesan syllabus and further raising the profile of the subject'. Children value their role in decision making through the school council. They spoke with pride about their accomplishments. The school is committed to the professional development of all staff and two senior leaders have been successful in attaining headships in church schools.

SIAMS report 9th May 2014 St Andrew's, Dearnley, Rochdale OLI2 9QA