

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Agnes CE (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School

Hamilton Road
Longsight
Manchester
M13 0PE

Diocese: Manchester

Local authority: Manchester
Dates of inspection: 13th. June 2013
Date of last inspection: 18th. November 2008
School's unique reference number: 105500
Headteacher: Mrs Nicola Clinton
Inspector's name and number: Mr Geoffrey Yates 430

School context

The school is larger than average and all pupils are from minority ethnic cultural groups. The proportion of pupils in receipt of free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is broadly average. There has been a change of headteacher since the previous inspection and the school has moved to a new purpose built building. Currently there is no incumbent at the local church.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Saint Agnes CE Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

'Learn to do well' encapsulates totally what this school is all about. The school provides a strong Christian witness within a very culturally diverse community. All those involved in the school work exceedingly hard and successfully to challenge and inspire pupils to achieve their full potential. Pupils make rapid progress achieving above average attainment by the time they leave. The school is held in very high regard in its community.

Established strengths

- The vision, leadership and example of the headteacher, senior leaders and school governors
- The children are delightful; they behave impeccably and have very positive attitudes. They have a very strong respect and understanding of Christian beliefs and customs
- The importance given to prayer and to acts of worship
- The school building, the country's first 'flat pack' school provides a highly stimulating environment for learning to take place

Focus for development

- The school to do all it can to maintain and develop the strong links developed with the local church, despite the church currently not having a vicar
- Pupils to develop a greater leadership role in relation to the school's Christian character

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

Children are happy, safe and valued in school. The school's Christian character, totally focused on 'learning to do well' ensures excellent academic achievement and strong personal development for all its pupils. Children start school with low language skills in English yet by the time they leave achieve well above national averages in English and mathematics. The emphasis given to key Christian principles such as 'Respect' and 'Endurance' are totally embedded in the life of the school. Alongside this is the school's strong awareness that these principles are also there in other world faiths. Religious education makes a very strong contribution to the school's Christian character. For example, very young pupils on a visit to the local church are able to correctly identify and name key items of furniture. Discussions held with random groups of children demonstrate they have a good understanding of how important the Bible is to Christians. Pupils in this highly inclusive community are very polite are a delight to talk with and have a strong sense of caring for others less fortunate than themselves. One child's view sums up that of many, 'Kindness is important for everyone.' The school's Christian character has a very strong impact on ensuring all pupils' needs are met. Important issues for pupils' development such as shaping relationships, promoting an understanding of and respect for diverse communities and ensuring that provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is highly effective are addressed successfully. Pupils receive a high level of care that enables them to develop high levels of self-esteem. They are proud to take on responsibility for things such as ensuring cloakroom tidiness or preparing the hall for worship. There is a distinctive Christian ethos that is evident in the way everyone is treated and in the high quality of relationships pupils have with one another and with adults. Rules are understood by all and are consistently, but fairly applied by the staff. The caring, sharing and respectful attitude of pupils reflects fully the school's values. This was demonstrated during the inspection when Year 6 pupils listened intently to some of their classmates playing violins, giving vigorous, well deserved and spontaneous applause.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is a very important part of school life and celebrates not only Christianity but other world faiths. All members of the school community value and engage in worship. The school, taking full account of pupils' and parents' religious beliefs has struck the right balance in deciding to what extent worship is distinctly Christian. The chosen themes help pupils to develop an understanding of the importance of Jesus Christ and Christian beliefs to Christians. The start of the school day is a joyous occasion with younger pupils using their singing skills very well in class songs with relevant meanings for pupils' personal development. One pupil's comment about worship sums up the views of many, 'I like collective worship because God can show us the right way.' Another pupil commented, 'I like it because it makes me think.' Pupils are given a good awareness of Anglican traditions with the right balance struck between ensuring customs from other world faiths are not neglected. The involvement of senior staff, pupils and, until recently the vicar, in leading worship ensures that pupils experience a good range of different approaches. Pupils volunteer to lead class worship. For example, during the inspection, pupils confidently led class prayers linked to a theme celebrating Fathers' Day. The school places a major emphasis on the importance of prayer which contributes well to pupils' spiritual development. One child's prayer included the line, 'God likes it when we pray so that makes me happy.' The school has taken effective steps to evaluate the distinctiveness of worship since the previous inspection and is constantly looking for different ways to make this process even better. A good new initiative has been for evaluations to be made of how well the themes for worship are thought-provoking and challenge pupils to think out things for themselves.

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

The headteacher with the very strong support from the deputy headteacher, senior staff and governors provides exceptional leadership firmly grounded in Christian principles and on the premise that nothing but the best will do. As a result, standards of achievement are high and the personal needs of all pupils are met exceptionally well. Leadership and management ensure a clear vision of the distinctiveness of the school as a church school within a multi-faith context. The importance of staff development can be seen in the support given by the school in allowing the religious education co-ordinator one day a week release to attend a Bible college in order to improve her knowledge of ways to teach and to lead the subject. The school's provision for worship meets statutory requirements. Very good steps have been taken to evaluate the school's effectiveness and the school has an accurate view of itself as a church school. The ethos is reflected in the way pupils respond so well to all that is provided for them. The impressive school building, with its excellent roof-top playground, visually attractive displays of pupils work and high quality IT equipment reflects fully the importance of giving pupils the very best opportunity to succeed. The Christian ethos of the school is kept very much to the fore by the Foundation governors and is seen by the chairman of governors as highly important alongside the way the pupils' own religious beliefs are respected. The work done in the past by the vicar is greatly valued in ensuring close links between church and school. Currently there is no incumbent to carry on all this work but church members and governors are fulfilling much of it. Valuable links are in place with the diocese. In consequence, relationships with the church are outstanding as is the promotion of pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. The issues from the previous inspection have been addressed. Parents are mostly very happy with the school with many of them past pupils. They know that their viewpoints are important to the school.

SIAMS report June 2013 Saint Agnes VC CE Primary School, Longsight M13 0PT