

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Andrew's CE Primary School

Nuttall Lane
Ramsbottom,
Bury,
Lancashire
BL0 9JD

Diocese:

Manchester

Local authority:

Bury

Dates of inspection:

12th March 2009

Date of last inspection:

29th November (AM) and 30th November (AM) 2005

School's unique reference number:

105326

Headteacher:

Mr Damian Marsh

Inspector's name and number:

Mrs Carol Howard 437

School context

St Andrew's CE Primary School is an average sized primary school in the small town of Ramsbottom. There is little cultural or racial diversity. Numbers of pupils on the SEN register and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals are below national average. The school has gained the 'Healthy Schools Award', 'International Schools Award' and 'Activemark Gold Award' for sports provision. It is the headteacher's second year in post.

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

A deep Christian ethos underpins all aspects of teaching and learning. The carefully drafted Mission Statement confirms the need to support staff and children to develop each other in 'the Spirit of Jesus'. The effects are clearly perceived in the atmosphere of the school. Relationships between children, staff, parents, governors and the community are good.

Established strengths

- a deep Christian ethos provides the foundation for all policies and practice;
- prayer plays an essential part in the day to day life of the school;
- there are excellent links with the local church and there is a clear sense of a united school community;
- the teaching of moral values is underpinned by the school's strong Christian foundation.

Focus for development

- establish strategies for evaluating the effectiveness of collective acts of worship so that the opinions and needs of all are taken into account.
- place more emphasis on the children's understanding of other faiths by improving links between the school and the wider community.

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

A deep-rooted Christian ethos permeates all features of school life. Prominently displayed class prayers play an active part in the daily routine of the school and older pupils say that they “believe it is important to learn about Jesus and God”. Pupils’ moral development and social conscience are good, for example, in order to raise awareness of issues in other parts of the world, the school works to support a Tsunami orphanage in India and pupils are fundraising to sponsor a child. However, the school recognises that establishing links that enrich children’s understanding of the wider community is an area for development. Pupils feel valued and report that “staff always make them feel special, not just sometimes”. Relationships in school are good; pupils say that staff are caring and kind and that “school is a safe and welcoming place where nobody gets left out”. Children believe that the staff like each other and describe the staff room as being a “happy place”. Parents report that children are surrounded by Christian values and they appreciate the close links that the school enjoys with the church. The atmosphere around school and at playtime is happy and caring and children are considerate and well-mannered to adults and each other. Older pupils are linked with Early Years children in a most effective buddy system that is celebrated at the end-of-year leavers’ service in church. Year 6 pupils act responsibly and they believe that this prepares them well for the future.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.

Worship has a very good impact on pupils’ spiritual development and is a central part of school life. The quiet, respectful way that children of all ages enter and leave the hall shows that worship is held in high regard. A cross and candle help children focus on the Lenten message. The children’s spiritual awareness is good because they are closely involved in the writing and reading of prayers for collective worship as well as individual prayers for each class. Prayers read by the children, focused on a theme of ‘What can we do to make a difference?’ and pupils from the school council spoke of how prayer makes a difference in their thinking and behaviour. Children and staff sing with obvious enjoyment and everyone joins in. Children have a good understanding of Christian worship because the Christian focus of worship is distinct and the major events of the Christian calendar are celebrated both inside school and church. Children enjoy going to church and comment that, “it’s cool” The planning for whole school worship is good but does not yet include regular evaluation involving the opinions of all school members.

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

The clear, shared Christian vision of St Andrew’s is evident in all the documentation published by the school and is promoted in practice, for example, discipline, respect and moral education are strong within the school ethos. The headteacher leads by example and is highly respected by all. Parents feel that their views are listened to and that the headteacher is “very approachable”. They have confidence in both him and the staff. Through consultation staff and governors are included in developing a shared Christian vision for the school and governors and parents are closely involved in the life of the school. Governors, parents and staff work well together to support and develop the Christian ethos of the school. There is a very active and successful PTFA which has raised money to set up a lending library in the school staffed by volunteers. Governors have committee structures that work very well and they receive professional development in their roles. The partnership between the church, school and the local community is strong with the school providing premises for church uniformed organisations and the church providing venues for school plays. The vicar is a regular visitor to the school making valuable contributions to the Christian vision, to collective worship and also RE lessons.