



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Margaret's C of E Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Lower Breck Road
Anfield
Liverpool
L6 4BX

Previous inspection grade: Good
Diocese: Liverpool
Local authority: Liverpool
Date of inspection: 27 November 2014
Date of last inspection: July 2009
School's unique reference number: 134245
Headteacher: Jan McCallum
Inspector's name and number: Ruth Wall (548)

School Context

The school is a much larger than the average-size primary school with 432 children on roll. There is an above average level of pupil mobility during the school year. An increasing proportion of children speak English as an additional language. The proportion of children with special educational needs is above the national average. There have been some changes to the staff since the last inspection in response to increasing welfare and child protection issues. The school achieved the Investors in People award in 2013.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Margaret's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Christian values are clearly expressed and demonstrated by children, staff and governors and underpin the positive relationships between all members of the community and the excellent behaviour of the children.
- The care, nurture and guidance given to children and their families demonstrate the distinct Christian ethos of the school.
- The school provides broad and creative learning experiences which deepen children's spiritual understanding across the curriculum, especially in Religious Education (RE) and Collective Worship.

Areas to improve

- Promote greater pupil involvement in the planning and leading of Collective Worship to further develop their confidence and skills in leadership.
- Establish links with Christian groups from other countries in order to develop children's global view of Christianity.

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

Distinctly Christian values are deeply embedded in the life of the school and are linked to the life and teaching of Jesus. Teachers and children affirm that expectations for conduct are consistently linked to the school's core Christian values of truth, fairness, justice and joy. Where there is challenging behaviour staff demonstrate immense sensitivity and understanding which children respond to positively. Children are extremely friendly, courteous and respectful. The school is rightly proud that strategies for improving attendance levels are proving successful. Christian values, including trust and love, give children the confidence to try new tasks and enabled to give of their best consistently. From their individual starting points all groups of children make good or better progress, including those for whom English is an additional language, those with special educational needs and the more able. The school community not only enjoys celebrating children's efforts and achievements but staff say they are delighted when their professional achievements are recognised in whole school worship. The school has a strong commitment to Christian stewardship, supporting a range of charities including Fair Trade and Christian Aid. This reinforces the Christian message of justice and equality. Although children have an awareness of Christianity as a multi-cultural global faith, leaders recognise that this lacks depth at the present time. Children's spiritual development is greatly enhanced by a wide range of reflective activities. These include the digital photography project which involved all children in producing a series of high quality hard-backed books of their photographs. Subjects range from creative images inspired by the school motto 'By Faith and Work', to 'Signs of Spring' and 'Hope in Liverpool', dedicated to the Anglican and Catholic cathedrals. High quality displays and Christian signs and symbols emphasise the school's distinctiveness and support the children's spiritual awareness and development extremely well. 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. RE fully supports the Christian character of the school and makes an excellent contribution to the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is highly valued by all members of the school family. The headteacher explained that 'gathering together as a family creates a secure and constant oasis of calm'. Worship is well planned to cover Christian themes, with a strong emphasis on Christian values. Worship enables children to understand the qualities of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit through the themes and stories which are included in the planning cycle. The vicar is involved in the planning process and regularly leads worship. Staff agree that he is an inspirational teacher and, 'he encourages children to ask challenging questions'. Children smile and say 'he always makes it fun...it helps us learn'. Anglican responses and prayers contribute to the development of children's prayer life. Children articulate an understanding of the importance of personal prayer. One child spoke of praying for hope during a difficult time. All children as class groups are involved in developing and presenting a theme for whole-school worship, with clear reference to biblical teaching. Children clearly enjoy their involvement although, at the present time, these are mainly teacher led acts of collective worship. The school choir and musicians often enhance the worship experience and evaluation from children has resulted in the inclusion of more singing in worship. Parents too are involved in the evaluation process and their requests are noted and responded to by the school. The school community enjoys worship in the church. This creates a valued link with the worshipping life of the parish and it enriches the experience of the whole school. The Easter 'Resurrection Rock' performance was described by parents as 'memorable and moving'. The school and church work effectively together on Experience days which include Harvest, Advent, Easter and Pentecost. These make an outstanding contribution to children's spiritual development, reflection and understanding of key Christian festivals. Governors speak of 'the powerful spiritual response from children'.

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

The headteacher, senior leaders and governors are highly effective in articulating the distinctive Christian vision and ethos and in promoting and establishing that ethos throughout the school and beyond to the community. Christian values are clear and understood. The vicar/ chair of governors states emphatically that, 'it's much bigger than a display of values...we present them to children as safe and secure building blocks on which to develop their lives'. The governors' Distinctiveness Committee supports the school in a variety of ways. They monitor a range of activities and submit a written report to the full governing body. This ensures that all aspects of church school distinctiveness continue to contribute to the development of the school's Christian foundation. The issue raised at the previous inspection has been fully addressed. Staff training contributes effectively to church school development and supports planning for future leadership in church schools. Through diocesan training all staff understand the distinctive nature of church schools and their role within it. Leaders and governors have been successful in ensuring that the academic needs of all pupils are met. In doing so they have recognised the importance of the school's Christian character in creating an ethos which supports effective learning and their commitment to promoting equal opportunities. The strong link with St Margaret's Church enables pupils and families to have positive views of the role of the Christian church within the community. Links with the wider community are varied and strong. They include actively supporting sixth form students through The Faiths Primary Teaching Programme, in their first steps to becoming teachers or teaching assistants. The subject leader for RE has benefitted from diocesan training and is demonstrating excellent leadership and commitment in identifying and driving through school improvement initiatives. Children take their responsibilities seriously and value their role in decision making through the school council. Parents recognise the distinctive Christian qualities of the school and speak highly of the care given to children and families. They are consulted on church school issues and appreciate being kept informed of school and church activities through regular school newsletters.

SIAMS report November 2014 St Margaret's, Anfield, Liverpool L6 4BX