

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Michael's Church Of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

The Grove
Flixton
Urmston
Manchester
M41 6JB

Diocese:	Manchester
Local authority:	Trafford
Date of inspection:	15/03/2013
Date of last inspection:	02/07/2007
School's unique reference number:	106350
Acting Headteacher:	Mrs A Drayton
Inspector's name:	Mr A Beedie
SIAS inspector number	61

School context

This average-sized school serves mainly White British pupils and a few others from minority ethnic backgrounds. The areas has little or no economic disadvantage and the entitlement to free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities is below the national average. No pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The school holds the award of the Eco-Schools Green Flag and Artsmark Gold.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Michael's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

St Michael's CE Primary School provides its pupils with an outstanding environment in which they are nurtured as learners and as individuals. The governors and school leadership have ensured that the school continues to be successful because their work is founded on a clear Christian vision, and this approach is attractive to members of all faiths and of none. The clear Christian direction of the school is undiminished even though the school is currently in a period between the retirement and appointment of headteachers.

Established strengths

- The caring Christian ethos of the school, which ensures that every child is enabled to achieve their best.
- The unanimity of purpose which is understood by children, staff and governors, and which ensures that the school continues to seek to improve.
- The importance the school places on preparing the pupils to play a full part in school life, in the wider community and in the world

Focus for development

- Ensure that teachers take opportunities to develop co-operative and active approaches to learning in Religious Education lessons.
- Make provision for children and others to engage in quiet reflection in settings provided inside and outside the school.

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

This is a school in which all learners are enabled to flourish, because every aspect of the school's work is influenced by firmly embedded Christian values such as service, responsibility and fellowship. The acting headteacher displays a passion for Christian leadership, and she is supported by dedicated staff who help to put these values in place in practical terms day by day. As a result, parents are able to express how well their children are supported and nurtured. The curriculum and other activities in school help the children to

recognise that they have a place in making a difference in their community and in the world. Children are encouraged increasingly to take up responsibilities such as becoming play leaders and eco committee members, and this contributes greatly to their social development. The curriculum has been carefully planned to ensure children experience a wide range of cultural events so that they are prepared to play a part in a diverse society. The school's provision for the spiritual development of the children is strong and improving. For example, the school environment provides some significant opportunities to allow children to reflect, both on Christian values and themes; and time is created in the school day for children also to reflect on their learning. Relationships between staff and children, within the staff, and also with parents and governors, are steeped in the co-operative ethos and Christian values of the school.

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

The children speak enthusiastically about the value they gain from collective worship at school, and worship clearly holds a central part in school life. Acts of worship are engaging and lively, with a good balance of approaches and themes, reflecting the seasons of the church year, and key Christian values. Children frequently take a lead in aspects of the worship, and often make suggestions or offer material which can be used as a basis for acts of worship. The children are familiar with some aspects of Anglican practice and also how some other Christian denominations worship, together leading to a good understanding of Christian worship. The school day is punctuated by opportunities for prayer, and there are reminders in the school environment of the themes and key messages of the school's worship. All classes write a class prayer together at the start of the school year, and use the prayer as a constant reminder of their purpose together. The children visit the church at least three times per year, including Christmas and Easter, and also hold a special Michaelmas service. The vicar leads worship in school every week, and many children also attend church or Sunday School, so there is a close relationship between worship in school and Sunday worship. The planning of worship is coherent and creative, and the school is developing opportunities for children and others to be involved in evaluation of worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

Religious Education has a high profile in the school and it is well taught. As a result, children are very positive about their learning in Religious Education, and they are able to understand how it affects their own experience and beliefs. Children are provided with excellent opportunities to develop their spiritual understanding within RE lessons, because teachers often plan to take the learning beyond knowledge of religious practices, and allow time for children to reflect on what is significant for them as learners, thinkers and believers. The children have good Biblical knowledge, and a sound understanding of the principles of other major faiths. The RE policy sets out that children spend two thirds of the time studying Christianity and one third on other faiths. The school has access to a range of high quality resources to help children understand the practices and messages of other religions, and good use is made of visitors to school who have been able to provide some first-hand knowledge of other faiths. The subject is extremely well led by the acting headteacher, who is an enthusiastic subject leader. As a result, teachers are being effectively prepared for their role in teaching the subject. Religious Education is effectively incorporated into some cross-curricular topic work, but there is scope to develop Christian values across other parts of the curriculum. Standards in RE are broadly in line with standards in the core subjects in the school, and children make good progress in RE across both Key Stages.

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

All members of the school community are able to express how the school's Christian values, driven by the leadership of the acting headteacher and the senior staff, make a difference to all aspects of the school's work. The personal and spiritual needs of children and staff are addressed exceptionally well and as a result, any issues or disagreements are quickly identified and resolved. The school plays a central role in the lives of the children and supports parents very well. There are excellent relationships with the local church and faith communities, and there are plans for the school to develop their global links further,

specifically in terms of the River of Life project in Uganda. Governors, staff and children are consulted on how the school can continue to develop and improve, and this is having a positive impact on the experiences of the children.

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