



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### **Wigan St. Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Mort Street  
Springfield  
Wigan  
WN6 7AU

**Diocese:** Liverpool  
**Local authority:** Wigan  
**Date of inspection:** 13<sup>th</sup> June 2013  
**Date of last inspection:** April 2008  
**School's unique reference number:** 106449  
**Headteacher:** Mrs Wendy Massey  
**Inspector's name and number:** Mrs Ruth Wall 548

#### **School context**

This average sized school is close to Wigan town centre. Children come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. The vast majority of children are of white British heritage. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is below the national average as is the number with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Since the previous inspection there have been numerous staffing changes and a new chair of governors has been appointed.

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

This is a very friendly and happy school with a caring Christian ethos in which all members of the school community are highly valued and nurtured as individuals. There is strong and committed leadership by the headteacher, supported by the staff, governors and parents. The emphasis on Christian values enables all children to reach their full potential in both personal and academic development.

#### **Established strengths**

- The strong Christian ethos which underpins the work of the school and permeates all aspects of school life
- The clear vision of the leadership team and their success in embedding Christian values within the daily life of the school
- The strong link with St Andrew's Church

#### **Focus for development**

- To ensure that a system is put in place for governors to be involved in procedures for monitoring and evaluating religious education (RE) and collective worship
- To extend children's learning about non-Christian in RE so as to deepen their understanding
- To establish links with leaders from different Christian traditions

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

The school's mission statement which begins, 'As a Christian school we look to Jesus as our role model...' summarises this school perfectly. From comments made by staff, parents, children and governors it is clear that this statement is understood and lived out in all areas of school life. Christian values are fully embedded in the school's care and concern for all members of the school community. This makes an exceptional contribution to the children's social and moral development. Staff agreed that theirs is a 'strong spiritual community', where they are all appreciative of the prayerful support they receive for their professional and personal lives. Children have positive attitudes to their learning and know they are valued and respected by staff. A group of children agreed that the best thing about their school was, 'it's a big family'. Children are polite, friendly and very well behaved. A teacher explained that children are taught how to act and respond to others through reference to the Christian values. Children are encouraged to follow the example of Jesus in demonstrating concern for world issues and in helping others less fortunate than themselves. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the ethos of the school and believe the Christian distinctiveness adds to this strength. Christian displays throughout the school reflect the fact that Christian values are important here. Children's spiritual development is promoted effectively by the challenging religious education and inspiring acts of worship. Tracking of children's academic progress is thorough and rigorous, and intervention programmes are quickly put in place, which successfully address issues of underachievement. The majority of children are making expected, or better than expected progress when compared to the national average. Evidence shows that this is an inclusive school where all children are valued as individuals and are given equal opportunities to succeed.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Worship is a central feature of school life and is respected and enjoyed by the school community. All members of staff attend and take a full part in worship which gives a positive message to the children. As a result of outstanding leadership by the coordinator, worship is now well-planned and imaginatively delivered. Themes are rooted in Christian beliefs with a strong emphasis on Christian values for life. Worship has taken place in the outside environment to develop the children's sense of awe and wonder about God's creation. Monitoring and evaluation are used effectively and inform school improvement planning. Children agreed that they enjoyed the regular role play opportunities which, as one child put it, 'help us understand the stories better.' Their enthusiasm to take an active part in worship has led to the recent development of a children's worship group. The school has identified the need to develop links with a range of leaders from different Christian traditions to further enrich children's experience. In the worship observed, Christian symbols, images and music contributed to an appropriate and spiritually uplifting atmosphere. Children have an understanding of the Trinity and many can use their knowledge to inform their prayers. One child expressed this well by saying that, 'After Jesus died he left us the Holy Spirit to help us'. The children were impeccably behaved, sang well, responded to prayers and reflection time in a respectful way and participated enthusiastically. This is a 'prayerful school' where children and adults talk comfortably about why prayer is important to them personally. Much emphasis goes into planning celebrations of the main Christian festivals in St Andrew's Church, which gives the school and church communities invaluable worship times together. These occasions make a significant contribution to children's spiritual development and provide them with a good understanding of Anglican tradition as they take an active part. After the Easter service, parents commented, 'Every child in the school was involved', and, 'It made us think of the true meaning of Easter'.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Religious education (RE) supports the Christian ethos of the school. Monitoring and evaluation show that teaching of RE is now consistently good and this enables children to reach standards which are also good. RE has been a subject of focused school improvement since the last inspection. The subject leader has worked with a clear purpose and sense of direction in driving through initiatives to address issues identified at the previous inspection and to raise standards of attainment. She has benefited from diocesan training and now

provides informed and valued support to other teachers. Schemes of work follow the diocesan syllabus and reflect the school's Christian foundation. The RE curriculum includes learning about the Greek Orthodox church which is encouraging children to find similarities and develop an understanding that they are part of a larger global community. A wide variety of teaching and learning strategies are used to take account of the different learning styles of the children. These include art, music and multi-media resources, as well as visits from people representing their faiths. RE goes some way to help children draw comparisons between faiths and opportunities to relate these to their own faith. However, the study of other faiths lacks depth. Teachers make good use of open-ended questions and provide activities to stimulate creative thinking. Tasks set are carefully matched to children's abilities so they are motivated and challenged appropriately. Discussion and debate are an important part of RE. A teacher commented, 'Children now have the confidence to create their own learning challenges'. Assessment procedures are in place and are working effectively to inform planning, teaching and learning. There is no formal system in place for governors to be involved in the process of monitoring and evaluating standards of teaching and learning in RE.

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

Leadership of the school is based on strong and effective Christian values. The Christian ethos is the starting point in helping the leaders and managers formulate a clear vision for the school. The school's self-evaluation document is used effectively to clarify the present position of St Andrew's School and to inform continuous improvement. A strength in the leadership of the school is the role played by the excellence and distinctiveness leader who ensures that spiritual and Christian issues remain at the top of the agenda. She, with the support of the headteacher, senior leadership and the governing body is relentless in the drive to improve the school further. Governors are highly supportive of the school's leadership and Christian vision. They acknowledge the need to develop a more active role in monitoring and evaluating of standards in RE and worship. They recognise this as a key area for development in order that they can contribute fully to the school's self evaluation and inform development planning. Children feel comfortable in expressing their views through the school council and are confident that their suggestions are valued and acted on when appropriate. Members of staff have a shared commitment to improvement, which is evident in levels of support and positive relationships. Everyone's contribution is valued and appreciated. The school is committed to the professional development of teachers to prepare them for future leadership of church schools. Parents are given the opportunity to comment on church school issues and say that the school listens to their views and problems are dealt with quickly and sensitively. Relationships between school, the community and church are excellent. The vicar explained that he sees his work and relationship with the school as a vital part of his ministry.

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