

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

<p>St Michael's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School Sturgeons Hill, Lichfield , Staffordshire, WS14 9AW Diocese of Lichfield Staffordshire LA Date of inspection: 13 & 15/10/2009 Date of last inspection: 26/06/2007 Unique reference number: 124258 Headteacher: Miss Helen McKay Inspector's name and number: Mr W J Griffiths 195</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">School Context.</p> <p>A large primary school, housed on two sites, quite close to the centre of the Cathedral City. Pupils generally enter and leave the school with above average attainment. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average. Most pupils are white British, though there are 14 other ethnic backgrounds represented and a few pupils at an early stage of learning English. A number of new staff appointments have been made over the past year.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Michael's as a Church of England school are good.</p> <p>The headteacher, staff, foundation and other governors have a very clear Christian vision, which underpins the work of the whole school. They are currently making further improvements to the overall effectiveness of the school.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Established strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The strong impact of collective worship on the pupils, which develops their understanding of Christian values, Anglican traditions and practice.• The School Worship and Ethos Committee, which ensures that church school matters are kept under constant review, leading to further developments in the excellent partnership with the Church and the wider community.• A committed staff team supporting the work of the worship and RE co-ordinator in successfully using the school environment to develop spiritual awareness and promote the Christian ethos of the school.
<p style="text-align: center;">Focus for development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review and evaluate the planned staff training on leading worship to ensure that new members, in particular, are confident and secure in this area of their work.• Assist pupils in developing their role in leading class worship so that they are more independent and can plan worship for larger groups.• Complete the current work on definitions of Christian values, making these accessible to pupils and the whole school community.
<p style="text-align: center;">The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good at meeting the needs of all learners.</p> <p>Pupils see the school as a safe place where they feel special and which allows them to flourish as individuals. Parents and visitors describe the school as warm, friendly and happy. One parent said, "<i>Children have a good experience here, not just academic, which makes them the people they are</i>". Behaviour is very good. Worship in school, church and, on occasions, the cathedral strongly supports pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils' achievements in music, sporting, historical and residential events are rewarded and acknowledged through weekly celebration worship. The school environment is also used well to enhance learners' spiritual development through the impact of a variety of Christian symbols, posters and displays of pupils' work. Pupils show their ability to explain these and underlying Christian values, such as love and forgiveness. Spaces acknowledging God in all classrooms demonstrate that pupils are given time for reflection. Written material in the well used 'prayer' and 'feelings' boxes is followed up sensitively by staff. One display, arising from class worship, centres on a pupil's concern for the soldiers and the people in Afghanistan and another on what it takes to put friendship into action. Parents praise the visits to other places of worship, such as the local mosque and a synagogue. These help to teach pupils respect for other faiths and cultures and assist in promoting community cohesion, which is developing well. Parents also pay tribute to the work of the church ministry team, citing their skills in handling issues in school, such as the death of a child. The school meets the needs of its staff and parents by means of well-being training and Parent Partnership. Pupils demonstrate thought</p>

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for others through fundraising for charity, organising some events themselves. Harvest gifts are delivered to needy members of the community and funds sent to a project in Kenya. Pupils' knowledge of the wider world community is enhanced through the sale of Fair-trade items at breaks. Links with overseas schools in Africa and Spain are currently being explored.

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

Pupils' attitudes to worship are good as result of the breadth and range of collective worship offered. This is a major strength of the school and its impact is seen clearly to develop learners' understanding of Christian values, as well as Anglican traditions and practice. In addition to class-based, key stage and whole-school worship, pupils regularly experience worship in church for the major festivals, such as the KS1 Harvest service observed during the inspection. When older pupils were asked about the future move to a single site, they were adamant about retaining their weekly worship in St Michael's church. KS2 pupils also experience very high quality joint worship with other schools in the Cathedral, observed during the inspection. Pupils are absorbed, involved and engaged by the worship. Their reactions are very positive, understanding the theme of valuing and looking after the created earth, as well as enjoying the procession with their banner, the band and the cathedral choristers. The range of worship experience offered is further demonstrated through the twice yearly Eucharist for older pupils. Pupils are well prepared by means of guidance notes and each class takes a school-baked loaf of bread for blessing and sharing later in class. These different forms of worship have a good impact on pupils' spirituality. Parents attending school worship say that some parents need more reminders to encourage them to see what they are missing. Visitors to school, for example by Shepherds Crook puppets, enrich the children's Christian experience during worship. Planning for collective worship is detailed, with ideas and resources available to assist leaders in addressing the fortnightly themes. Evaluation of worship is very good, a grading system allowing the co-ordinator to check the impact of each theme as well as single acts of worship. Children already enjoy playing an active part in helping to lead worship and, with the help of the co-ordinator, they plan to extend this role. The obviously central importance of worship in the life of this school is not currently reflected in its worship policy or other documentation.

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

The Headteacher is a practising Anglican who articulates a clear, personal vision for the school. She is very well supported by the Rector, his team, the worship/RE co-ordinator and other members of staff in helping to put the vision into practice. Governors ensure that the development areas identified at the last inspection are carried out as part of the overall school development plan (SDP). All foundation governors now belong to the School Worship and Ethos Committee (SWEC), which has considerably strengthened its ability to evaluate the distinctiveness of this church school. Reports from the Committee are provided half-termly to the full governing body so that the school's Christian character is seen to underpin the whole school improvement process. In developing their vision for the school, members have also recently reviewed the definitions of core Christian values and devised an acrostic, based on the school name, which makes an outstanding display in the school entrance area. They are currently working to make these definitions more accessible for pupils, parents and the wider community. Staff training for leading worship is part of the current SDP. The SWE Committee also co-opts parents to seek their views and consults the School Council, for example, on the introduction of prayer boxes. Parental questionnaire feedback shows that the school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on their children. Some pupils from non-church-going families have chosen to become confirmed as a result of their experiences within school. The partnership between the school, the church and the wider community is mutually supportive. As well as leading worship, clergy and church members support the school in a variety of activities, such as the Lent workshop. School families attend monthly family praise, Education Sunday and the extremely popular Christingle services in church. Links exist with the local Methodist Church, for example through Operation Christmas Child, St Michael's Youth Group and the interdenominational Lichfield Christian Schools Trust. The headteacher is a member of the Diocesan Board of Education and the school is used as a venue for Diocesan networking and training sessions. Staff members are encouraged to play active roles within the Church, thus helping to prepare for the future leadership of church schools.