



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Aughton St. Michael's Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School

Delph Park Avenue

Aughton

L39 5DG

Diocese: Liverpool

Local authority: Lancashire

Dates of inspection: 9 May 2014

Date of last inspection: January 2009

School's unique reference number: 119388

Headteacher: Fiona Cottam

Inspector's name and number: Jean Forward 625

School context

Aughton St. Michael's is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of children from minority ethnic groups is much lower than average. The proportion of children with special educational needs is below the national average. The proportion of children who receive funding through the pupil premium is also below the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Aughton St. Michael's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- An ethos based on a clear and explicit recognition of its Christian foundation underpins the positive values and attitudes embedded across the school.
- The strong Christian leadership of the headteacher and her vision for the development of the school as a church school ensure church school distinctiveness is a priority.
- The school is extremely successful in creating a caring and Christian environment in which children thrive, succeed and are happy.
- Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural (SMSC) development is outstanding and is rooted in the school's Christian ethos.
- Links with the parish church are extremely strong. As a result, children have a clear sense of belonging to the wider Christian community in Aughton.

Areas to improve

- Extend the monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship to include all members of the school community in order to deepen spiritual awareness and create an even wider variety of worship styles.
- Incorporate Christian values into the new creative curriculum so that children understand how Christian values influence every aspect of human life.

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

A strong commitment to Christian values and the development of the whole child underpin the work of the school. Children are able to talk about the importance of key Christian values and their promotion is evident in the daily life of the school. A child said, 'We learn about different values and we can use them all the time.' Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is outstanding. They demonstrate a strong sense of social responsibility and this is developed through a range of activities including the Rotary Junior Community award and Archie Bishop Young Leaders Award. Behaviour is outstanding and expectations are consistently linked to the school's core Christian values. All members of the community know that they are valued and the outstanding ethos of trust and respect is clearly evident. Children are extremely courteous, friendly and responsible. They know that their opinions and ideas will be valued. They comment that they are able to share concerns with their teachers and they know that these will be addressed in a sensitive way. Year 6 children say that the school prepares them extremely well for the transition to secondary education. Parents say that they feel welcome in the school and that staff are approachable and supportive. A parent said that the school 'helps my child to understand that everyone is special and is loved by God.' The school has a strong commitment to Christian stewardship, supporting a range of charities including Barnardo's, Samaritan's Purse and Children in Need. The school also has a strong overseas link with a school in Kenya and has recently established a link with a culturally diverse school in Liverpool. These initiatives make a positive contribution to children's understanding of God's wider family. Teaching and learning in Religious Education (RE) make a highly effective contribution to the school's distinctive Christian ethos. Children demonstrate their ability to reflect on Bible stories and express their opinions in a thoughtful and intelligent way. Colourful displays and Christian signs and symbols emphasise the school's distinctiveness and support the children's spiritual awareness and development extremely well. Attractive classroom reflection tables relate to themes in RE and Christian values. Outdoor areas provide opportunities for reflection and are highly effective in supporting children's spiritual development. Children are enthusiastic about their learning. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities which make an outstanding contribution to personal development and team work. The outstanding Christian environment creates a culture in which all children are able to feel secure and supported and this enables them to learn with confidence. The vast majority of children make at least good progress during their time in the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The act of collective worship is distinctively Christian and is central to the life of the school. All members of the school community have the opportunity to celebrate the presence of God in their daily lives and to deepen their understanding of Christian values. Planning is thorough and incorporates themes based on Christian values, the Bible and major Christian festivals. Worship is vibrant and varied and all members of staff are involved. Children demonstrate a high level of enjoyment and spiritual awareness. Outstanding provision is made for prayer and worship across the school. Silence and moments for reflection play an important part in the school's approach to prayer. Familiar prayers are said during the day and these make a highly effective contribution to the development of children's spiritual life. Anglican responses have not yet been introduced to the children. Children are encouraged to write their own prayers and this supports their understanding of being close to God. A child said, 'We like to speak to God.' Highly effective use of Biblical themes supports children's growing understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The children participate regularly through drama, music, reading and prayers. Children in Y6 plan and lead worship on a regular basis and this is highly effective in developing their understanding of the importance of worship in a Christian community. The parish priest leads worship in school and provides a high level of

involvement. He makes an extremely valuable contribution to the planning process. This creates a unique link with the worshipping life of the church and it enriches the experience of the whole school. The school worships in church for major festivals and children are enthusiastic about their involvement on these special occasions. The link between the school and the parish church is extremely strong and this draws children and families into the wider worshipping community. Experience Easter and Messy Church bring the school and members of the congregation together as members of the St. Michael's wider Christian family. These opportunities inspire children and help them to reflect on their faith. Members of the School Council have the opportunity to evaluate worship but the school does not include all members of the community in this process.

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

The headteacher, ably supported by staff and governors, promotes highly effective Christian leadership. There are clear priorities for the development of the school's Christian ethos. Policies and planning have Christian values and the school's vision at their heart. Foundation governors have an excellent understanding of their role. They are highly effective and support the school in a variety of ways. The Church School Distinctiveness committee meets regularly to provide rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the school's vision and strategic planning for church school development. This ensures that the Christian ethos constantly affects all aspects of school life and contributes to the school's responsibility to meet the needs of every child. Christian values have been incorporated into the wider curriculum and it is intended that planning for the new curriculum will further develop the inclusion of these values. The parish priest makes a highly valuable contribution to the life of the school. Pastoral care for the staff, children and families is outstanding and contributes to the school's commitment to Christian love and compassion. Highly effective professional development ensures that staff understand how to foster the distinctively Christian character of the school through all aspects of teaching and learning. Opportunities are also provided for staff to develop Christian leadership qualities and skills. The experienced RE co-ordinator provides highly effective leadership. Monitoring through lesson observations and procedures for assessment ensure that standards and progress are in line with expectations. Parents recognise the distinctive Christian qualities of the school and speak highly of the respect with which they and their children are treated. Parents also speak positively about the ways in which the school and church work together to provide an outstanding Christian education. The establishment of a teaching and learning responsibility post for SMSC demonstrates the school's emphasis on developing children's understanding of the importance of their own community and environment and those in more diverse settings. Strong links with the diocese ensure that the school is well informed and able to develop all aspects of Christian distinctiveness.

SIAMS report May 2014 St. Michael's C of E Primary School Aughton L39 5DG