St Andrew’s Church of England Primary School

Deyes Lane, Maghull, L31 6DE

Current SIAMS inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Liverpool

Previous SIAMS inspection grade: Good

Local authority: Sefton

Date/s of inspection: 22 February 2017

Date of last inspection: 24 May 2012

Type of school and unique reference number: Voluntary Controlled 104895

Headteacher: Sue Kerwin

Inspector’s name and number: Gail Fullbrook 530

School context

St Andrew’s is a larger than average two form entry primary school. Pupils come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. The school serves the local community of Maghull, however an increasing number of pupils now attend the school from neighbouring communities. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is generally well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities is well below the national average. The school has attained the Liverpool Diocese Church School Awards 1 and 2.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Andrew’s as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Christian values are central to the life of the school and have a transformational impact upon relationships and pupils’ learning behaviour.
- Worship is an important aspect of school life and impacts positively upon pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christian teaching.
- The ways in which the personal development and well-being of pupils is nurtured is outstanding. As a result pupils feel safe and happy and show great care for their peers.

Areas to improve

- Develop a consistent understanding of the ways in which prayer spaces, reflection areas and displays within classrooms and around the school, contribute to pupils’ spiritual development. This will help teachers to focus on the spiritual development of the children to greater effect.
- Continue the current focus on identifying the characteristics of each aspect of spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development within KS1 and 2. This will support teachers in tracking pupils’ SMSC development and identifying where additional experiences would be beneficial.
The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners

The wellbeing of children and their families is central to the distinctively Christian ethos and vision at St Andrew’s primary school. The senior leadership team, supported by staff and governors, recognise that it is when pupils are happy and healthy that they learn well. Attendance and punctuality are above the national average. Support, in line with the school’s Christian character, is given to individual pupils and their families where attendance is of concern. Pupils make good progress through the school and generally attain well. Christian values provide the bedrock upon which the life of the school is built. They are consistently reinforced through school routines and awards. Their transformational impact is recognised and appreciated by parents and well understood by the pupils themselves. Pupils are familiar with a range of Biblical stories that underpin each Christian value. They say that the values help them to make good choices and to be good friends. The impact of the values is regularly reviewed through learning walks and discussions with staff and pupils. The depth of pupils’ understanding was evident in a conversation about the importance of values to those of other faiths and to people with no faith. One pupil commented that, ‘People who aren’t Christians may have the same values but sometimes understand them in a different way.’

Pupils benefit from the wide range of experiences offered by the school, both as part of the curriculum and through additional extra-curricular activities. This has a significant impact on SMSC development and supports pupils’ outstanding personal development. Pupils say that they are confident that they are being well prepared for the future. One pupil commented that ‘we grow in love, maturity and brain thinking here’ and ‘the school is part of our local community but we belong to God’s community too’. Pupils are committed to supporting others, both locally and internationally. They have recently taken part in a ‘Knit-a-thon’ with members of the local community raising funds for a neo-natal unit and a toy and book sale where funds were raised for the charity, ‘New Hope for Africa’.

Year 6 pupils, known as the lunch bunch, take it in turns to help at the church luncheon club. In doing so they spend time learning from and about older members of their local community. Pupils are given a range of opportunities within religious education (RE), worship and across the curriculum to think deeply. They are encouraged to ask big and important questions and to learn from others as they reflect on their responses. Pupils develop a good knowledge about the other faiths they study and the ways in which belief has impact on daily life.

Relationships are a strength of the school. Parents say that staff are approachable and helpful and know that any concerns they have will be quickly and effectively dealt with. Pupils behave well, are courteous and well-mannered and show great kindness towards each other. When discussing the importance of their school motto, ‘Together in God’s love we learn, inspire and grow’, pupils use words such as family, welcome, and trust to describe their school. One pupil talked of ‘growing together in God’s love’ and another shared her amazement at how much she’d learned saying that ‘everyone learns here, even our teachers are still learning’.

The school has links with Christian communities overseas. Through pen pal letters and occasional visitors to the school, understanding and respect for those of other faiths and cultures is developing. Pupils know that Christianity is a global world faith. One pupil commented with sadness that, ‘in some countries they don’t let people go to church and punish them if they say that they are Christians’.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is central to the life of the school. Pupils enjoy worship and can identify ways in which it has helped them to understand Christian teaching. For example, when considering how many times God forgives, one pupil talked of Bible stories that show God’s unlimited forgiveness towards his people. Following worship about Jesus being the light of the world, another pupil talked of realising that his tongue could be like a spark spreading the light of God’s love.

The opening and closing sentences of worship are spoken by the head girl and boy and reflect the Anglican practice of the local church. During the interregnum a minister from a local evangelical church is leading worship each week and in so doing is expanding pupils’ awareness of a different worship tradition. Older pupils have regular experience of Eucharistic worship and are given the opportunity to seek Confirmation into the Church of England. Pupils’ SMSC development is nurtured within worship. One pupil commented that, ‘Jesus inspires us to learn about how to live so that we can inspire others.’ As well as supporting moral and spiritual development worship includes themes relating to world events that support pupils’ cultural and social development.

Worship is well planned and themes reflect the key festivals of the Church year. Experience Pentecost week and pop up prayer weeks give pupils experience of different ways of praying and responding to Christian teaching. They bring an excitement to prayer and worship and nurture pupils in developing a personal way of praying. Pupils value times of silent reflection within worship. Prayer spaces are in place in all classrooms and around the school. In some classrooms, they are well-used and support pupils’ spiritual development. There is however a lack of consistency in the quality of the spaces and of the ways in which they promote spiritual development. The prayer board in the school hall is well used and pupils appreciate the opportunity it gives for them to share personal prayers. Many pupils talk of the importance of personal prayer, both during the school day and at home.
Worship supports pupils’ understanding of key Christian teaching. They have an age appropriate understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Worship is Biblically based and provides frequent reinforcement of the school’s core Christian values and motto. Pupils recognise that the Bible forms a record of God’s people over time and teaches Christians how to live good lives. Worship is led by a number of adults including staff. The school’s words of worship (WOW) group regularly lead worship and speak with maturity about the importance of sharing the stories of Jesus with their classmates. The leadership and management of worship is of a very high standard. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating its impact are well developed. They involve a range of people, including staff, parents and pupils, and worship is constantly renewed and developed in the light of comments made. All classes have a WOW book which includes responses to worship and to particular aspects of the Christian character of the school.

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

Christian values and the teachings of Jesus are central to the life of the school. They permeate all aspects of pupils' development, both academically and socially, and effectively support the well-being of pupils and staff. Pupils know that when they struggle with their learning, help will always be given, as one child put it, ‘until the difficulty goes away’. Parents are confident that this support makes a significant contribution to the progress and attainment of their children. Pupils say that the school curriculum is interesting and the development of cultural links features alongside traditional subject development. A particular feature of the school is their commitment to developing understanding of the nature of family. The family board, a feature in all classrooms, shows photographs of pupils with their families. This supports pupils in developing understanding of the many ways in which families differ.

Effective procedures to support the monitoring and evaluation of the school as a church school are in place. The school's distinctiveness group meets regularly and has ensured that the areas for development at inspection in 2012 have been fully met. The group focuses each term on a particular aspect of the Christian character of the school. Through discussion, learning walks and visits to the school, current strengths are highlighted and areas where the school’s practice can be further developed are identified. Minutes from the meetings show that this process is both thorough and effective in bringing about change. Opportunities are offered to support the professional development of staff in relation to their roles within a church school. Governors remain committed to this professional development in spite of financial constraints.

Partnerships with the church are of a high standard and have been maintained through a long period of interregnum. The school has good and supportive links with other church schools and with Liverpool Diocese. The school is part of a debating group involving two other church schools from different social contexts. Issues such as the importance of green spaces in the local area are discussed and help pupils to appreciating viewpoints other than their own. Links with a Christian community in Rio de Janeiro bring a global dimension to school life and support understanding of Christianity as a world-wide faith.

Relationships with parents are strong and effective and are founded on the Christian character of the school. Parents are keen to share examples of the distinctiveness of the school. They say that teachers listen carefully and respond quickly to their concerns and that the school is safe. They believe that the respect shown by and to staff and amongst the pupils themselves can be directly attributed to core Christian values.

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