

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Nicholas C.E. Aided Primary School

School Road
Marton Moss
Blackpool, Lancashire
FY4 5DS

Diocese: Blackburn

Local authority: Blackpool
Dates of inspection: Tuesday 5th October 2010
Date of last inspection: 23rd April 2008
School's unique reference number: 119594
Headteacher: Mr A Mellor
Inspector's name and number: Mr Stephen Paul Adnitt 590

School context

St Nicholas' is a larger than average primary school situated in Southern Blackpool in a semi-rural setting. Pupils attend from a wide area. There are currently 322 pupils on roll, of whom 12% are on the Special Needs Register. The school role is a growing one, as a recent rebuild and refurbishment has brought capacity up to 420. Pupils from the Roma/Gypsy community form a large ethnic minority. Although the church is over a mile away links are very strong.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Nicholas' as a Church of England school are outstanding

St Nicholas' is an outstanding Church school with a strong and distinctive Christian Ethos. The inspiring and strong leadership enjoys excellent support from a very effective governing body and from all members of the school staff. The vicar and PCC of the joint benefice of St Nicholas and St Christopher's are firmly involved in the work and continuing Christian witness of this extremely effective Church school.

Established strengths

- The outstanding Christian leadership of the headteacher, who is well supported by staff, governors and parents.
- The quality of worship in which all children and staff are actively involved
- The school is a welcoming Christian community where all pupils and staff are valued and nurtured
- The quality of relationships within and outside school, which promotes a caring and inclusive ethos

Focus for development

- Improve standards in RE throughout the school by including more rigorous assessment and moderation of work undertaken in all year groups.

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

St Nicholas' school is an inclusive Christian school with a clear Christian mission, ethos and vision. The schools' values are evident in the way pupils and staff relate with each other. It is a loving and caring community. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well developed with Christian values at the heart of decision making. In 2009 the school was awarded a "Church School Distinctiveness" Award which recognised the impact that the school ethos and mission has on the personal development of all pupils. This distinctive Christian character of the school has a strong impact on the good standards of behaviour and on the pupils' excellent personal and social behaviour. All pupils know that they have a unique place in God's world. They readily talk about God's goodness and about the unfair

distribution of the earth's resources. They demonstrate this in their positive reactions to fund raising activities which has an impact on pupils' views of the wider world and their place in it. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and say that they are happy, encouraged and supported in school. The pupils are proud of their school and speak confidently about why it is special to them. Relationships within the school are excellent. This is evidenced in the good and positive relationships within the school family, with staff and pupils working well together. When problems have emerged pupils say staff have dealt with them sympathetically and fairly using Christian principles and values. The school involves pupils in the everyday running of the school through school council, eco-council, Schools United and the worship group. There are close ties with the united benefice of St Nicholas and St Christopher. As a result of this the church plays an important role in the life of the school. The school's mission statement underpins all that the school strives to achieve. Displays are very prominent and are of excellent quality and give outstanding support to the Christian character of the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is at the heart of school life. The governors see it as an essential part of all pupils' education and all the school community value it. It is of the highest quality and reflects the schools distinctive Christian character. A worshipful atmosphere is created by the use of music, silence, display and appropriate setting. The daily act of worship is Christian based and enhances the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. Opportunities are provided for reflection and prayer, which enhances children's spiritual development. Pupils respond in a variety of ways:- through songs, drama, role play and discussion. Christian values are promoted in worship and are clearly understood by the pupils. They enjoy worship and speak enthusiastically about the value of worship in their lives. A member of the school council commented, "Worship is good, knowing Jesus is there gathering with us and our friends and working for us!" Pupils are given opportunities to plan and be involved in worship, both whole school and class worship. They value this opportunity and speak about their contributions proudly. Worship is very well planned, evaluated and monitored by the headteacher in consultation with the vicar. Assessment monitors pupils' responses and gives guidance in planning the next stage of children's involvement in worship. The policy is regularly updated and is an important part of the School Development Plan. The school maintains close links with the local church and clergy. Pupils say they are encouraged in their growing faith by the vicar's regular visits to school. The vicar leads worship weekly and regularly visits classrooms to talk to pupils. The school visits church to mark major festivals. Pupils understand Anglican tradition and practice.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The RE content is in accordance with the Blackburn diocesan syllabus. It maintains a balanced approach between learning about religion and learning from religion. Most of the syllabus is based on Christianity with a study of Judaism and Hinduism completing the scheme. RE schemes of work are of good quality and assessment procedures are in place. However the monitoring of lessons and the consistency of assessment across the school needs to be more rigorous to ensure consistency of quality across the school. RE is taught effectively using a range of teaching styles. Written work is well presented and generally of a good standard. Good progress is made across all stages. Pupils demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. They participate with enthusiasm and talk confidently about their learning. Pupils are given the opportunity to reflect on what they are learning. One girl, a member of year 6, remarked that RE was "Knowing the word of God, learning what Jesus did to save us and trying to learn how to behave like him". Where pupils are challenged and engaged, questioning enables them to reflect on their learning and understand the significance of Jesus in their lives. Pupils show respect and knowledge of other world faiths and have a positive view of the world and its religions. Displays are used effectively to support pupils understanding of themes and topics covered.

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

The school is a worshipping community that has an outstanding impact on the lives of its pupils and families. The headteacher's vision, leadership and management, supported by all governors and staff, are of an excellent quality and strongly promote the school's powerful Christian ethos and character. Parents, pupils and governors speak highly of the school. The

headteacher is a hard working and inspiring Christian leader who takes all possible opportunities to promote St Nicholas' school as an effective and successful church school. The National Society self evaluation toolkit has been used very effectively to evaluate the strengths and aspirations of the school leadership. It is an accurate reflection of where the school is now and where it will be in the future. The governors are outstanding in their support of the head and the school. They are knowledgeable and contribute with great effect to the school's self evaluation process. Pupils' and parents views are sought regularly and this strengthens the school as a strong Christian family community. Parents speak highly of the effectiveness of the head as school leader. One parent commented, "He is a strong Christian leader who is approachable. This school is everything to my children". The school council is an important part of school life. Their views are taken seriously. Pupils contribute to the decision making process within school and feel that their ideas and suggestions are taken seriously and valued by the leadership of this school. St Nicholas' is a school that lives the Christian message and proclaims it loudly within and outside the school community. One of the Foundation governors remarked, "The school lives its mission statement. It is a God centred environment where every individual is respected"

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