

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Giles' and St George's Church of England Controlled Primary School

St Paul's Road
Off Orme Road
Newcastle
Staffordshire
ST5 2NB

Diocese: Lichfield

Local authority: Staffordshire

Dates of inspection: 28th January 2009

Date of last inspection: 16th - 18th May 2005

School's unique reference number: 124266

Headteacher: Mrs L Evans

Inspector's name: Mrs Helen Gilbert

School context

St Giles' and St George's Church of England School is an average sized Primary School which serves a relatively disadvantaged area of Newcastle-under-Lyme. In November 2005 the school moved into new premises in an area of residential rented and private housing. Nearly all the pupils are from white British families but a small number come from other ethnic groups and other faiths.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Giles' and St George's as a Church of England Primary School are good

Strong Christian values are embedded in every aspect of the life and work of the school and have a clear impact on the attitudes and the achievements of pupils. These values and the success of the school in meeting the needs of its pupils are well recognised and respected by all members of the wider community. The school is distinctive in linking with the two parish churches of St Giles' and St George's and this is helping pupils to see how the Christian faith can be expressed in different ways.

Established strengths

- The outstanding Christian character of the school that ensures that all pupils and their families are valued and nurtured.
- The school environment which helps pupils to honour God, his creation, and each other.
- The opportunities that pupils have for reflection and prayer which contribute greatly to their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- The care and concern that all pupils show towards each other and their wider community.

Focus for development

- Establish a clear system for evaluating the quality and impact of class based Collective Worship
- Implement the current plans for involving the Foundation Governors fully in promoting the vision and values of the school and developing the partnerships with the two parishes
- Improve pupils' understanding of Christian beliefs and Anglican practice

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

The vision and work of the school are based on strong Christian values which permeate every aspect of the school's life. These values are shared with new staff joining the school and all staff appreciate working within such a supportive school community. The atmosphere is tranquil and orderly throughout the whole day and relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. All pupils feel valued, respected and supported in everything they do - one little girl confirmed "the school helps you to be clever". As a result, the pupils value and respect each other and their environment. They are proud of their achievements and of their school. Pupils from other faiths know that they are welcomed and included, indicating the effectiveness of the school's measures for promoting community cohesion. The pupils enjoy learning about Christianity but also feel able to develop their own faith within the school. The children are spiritually aware and talk openly and comfortably about the importance of prayer, both for personal needs and for community and world leaders. They particularly appreciate the many opportunities they have for quiet reflection both during Collective Worship and around the school - one child explained "there are little corners where you can go to pray to God". Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and know that both they and their children will be supported, and enabled to achieve.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Great care is taken to create the right atmosphere for both whole school and class based acts of worship so that pupils attitudes are very good. Worship has a strong Christian focus and the planned themes include Bible stories and the celebration of major Christian festivals. There is also flexibility to include additional elements and to respond to events in order to meet the needs of the pupils. Songs and prayers are Christ centred, pupils enjoy taking part and older pupils are confident to say spontaneous prayers aloud. Pupils are affirmed in the belief that God is with them everywhere and at all times. The children particularly enjoy the opportunity for quiet reflection that worship gives them and feel that this helps them to deal with difficult issues. Staff are gaining confidence in leading class based worship having received training from the Diocesan adviser. Where practice is more developed children are able to talk, reflect and pray together and are developing an understanding of the different elements of prayer. Worship clearly has a very good impact on pupils' spiritual development and is central to school life. What is less well developed is pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christian beliefs and of Anglican practice. Staff and pupils feed back their responses to whole school worship but there is not yet a systematic programme for monitoring and evaluating classroom worship. This is an area that the school has identified for development. The school is still considering the introduction of the Eucharist.

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

The Head Teacher gives a strong lead and promotes the Christian vision of the school with staff, pupils, parents and governors and knows her pupils and their families well. She is well supported in this by the Deputy Head and the SENCO and as a result all members of the school community feel valued and appreciate the impact of Christian values on the school. When moving to the new site, the school has created a spiritual ambience within the building and the grounds that gives pupils many opportunities for calm reflection. As a result of good leadership, teamwork is a strength of the school and everyone is committed to improving the school still further. Pupils make good progress and achieve well, academically, socially and in sport and the arts. Training on leading worship has given staff the confidence and enthusiasm to develop classroom worship effectively. The Leadership Team keep the Governing Body well informed and this helps the governors to effectively hold the school to account. The Head Teacher has a clear vision for strengthening the links between the school and the two parishes and this is shared by the new incumbent of St Giles. The recently formed Foundation Governors Committee understands the role it needs to play in helping to articulate the Christian vision and holding the school to account for itself as a Church School.