

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### St. Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School High Crompton

Rushcroft Road  
Shaw  
Oldham  
OL2 7PP

**Diocese: Manchester**

Local authority: Oldham  
Date of inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> April 2012  
Date of last inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> October 2007  
School's unique reference number: 105711  
Headteacher: Mrs Pamela Hartley  
Inspector's name and number: Graham H Nuttall 456

#### School context

St. Mary's is an average sized primary school situated on the outskirts of Oldham. The vast majority of pupils are of white British heritage with an increasing number of children from other ethnic or faith backgrounds. The proportion entitled to free school meals is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school has gained a number of accreditations including the Active Mark, Bronze Eco and Healthy School Awards.

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

St Mary's is an outstanding church school. It reflects exceptionally well its Christian foundation providing many opportunities for children to develop as individuals within a safe, caring, welcoming and stimulating environment. Links with the church and local community are exceptionally strong. As a result of high quality provision and outstanding practice pupils make very good progress in their spiritual and wider personal development.

#### Established strengths

- The Christian vision and inspiring leadership of the headteacher and senior management team supported well by staff and governors
- The school's exceptionally strong links with the church and local community
- Outstanding standards of provision and outcome for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- Well planned and sensitively delivered acts of worship occupying a place of central importance in the life of the school

#### Focus for development

- Establish areas for reflection in classrooms

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

The Christian ethos of the school has a positive impact on the children's personal development. Parents speak openly about the school being a 'happy family school'. All children know they are valued and special; they are confident, caring and respectful. St Mary's is proud to be a Church of England school and its purpose is expressed boldly in its mission statement, 'to assist children on their spiritual journey within a Christian ethos'. Children experience high quality Christian care in a welcoming, friendly and supportive atmosphere. They are in no doubt that their views are respected and valued with dedicated teachers prepared to go the extra mile for children, the community and parents. As a result, relationships with all school partners are of a very high order. The school council plays an important part in evaluating different options and children have suggested a series of

measures to improve lunchtimes, healthy eating and play equipment. Fund raising activities organised by pupils such as coffee mornings for Macmillan nurses, Help the Aged and raising funds for the recently installed 'trim trail' help children to understand that they have a voice which is considered and listened to. Community cohesion is a strength of the school promoted through links with a local inner urban school and global links with the church sponsored Armonia community in Mexico. This helps to give children an understanding of world perspectives and broaden their cultural awareness. Children commented, "lessons are fun and we know staff are here to help us". Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very strong because of the positive impact made by the outstanding provision of extra curricular activities. Spiritual development is enhanced through children's reaction to interactive displays such as the 'Peace' theme located in the main entrance. The school has indicated that it wishes to extend such reflective areas within classroom areas.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

The daily period of collective worship is a very special part of the school day. Children are confident and talk openly about how they enjoy taking part, particularly when worship is held in church. Children respond reverently in prayer, ensuring an appropriate atmosphere. Positive role models from all members of staff ensure a very high standard of involvement. The sincerity and reverence of worship ensures that pupils and staff gain inspiration, are encouraged to grow spiritually and are personally affirmed. The energetic leadership of the "Groundbreakers" team during the observed act of worship included some poignant interaction with the children. The vicar is pivotal in his role within school and as a result there are exceptionally strong relationships with church from which children benefit and learn much. In addition to leading weekly acts of worship he skilfully leads class 'circle time' when children are given opportunity to reflect on their personal spiritual development. Many parents attend the worship led by pupils or upon occasions when worship takes place in church such as the recently held "Easter Experience". Children take an active part and speak enthusiastically about the experience. This develops learners' understanding of Anglican faith and practice very well. Effective planning, with themes related to Christian values and teaching aid children's understanding and appreciation of the Christian faith in their lives. Records are kept of themes covered in worship and some monitoring and evaluation helps to ensure worship is of a high quality; however formal evaluation is not completed on a daily basis.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

Religious Education (RE) is recognised by all as being particularly important in the school and this is reflected by the subject's status in the curriculum. Children are confident in their knowledge of Christianity and there is a growing understanding of the beliefs and practices of other world faiths. The school demonstrates a strong commitment to inclusion, with pupils recognising the need for respect and tolerance towards each other and other faith communities. Some of the teaching and learning is outstanding, particularly when there is an emphasis on developing an ability to think through situations and relate what is covered in lessons to daily life. For example, Year 5 pupils were asked to compare and contrast the roles of saints and angels and to reflect on how those roles affect them as individuals. When staff set challenging tasks, children are secure in exploring difficult issues with a level of maturity that highlights the school's focus on developing independent learners. Good links between RE and collective worship impact positively on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Standards of attainment in RE are above diocesan expectations, particularly at the end of KS2. Children's books reflect a detailed, consistent and thorough approach towards marking with a variety of teaching and learning techniques evident alongside clear differentiation of pupils' work. Through effective self-evaluation the school has modified its procedures for assessing standards of pupils' work and this helps to ensure that standards in RE are in line with other core subjects.

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

The dedication and commitment of the headteacher, staff team and governors all contribute significantly to the school as a church school. Their day-to-day leadership and management roles are driven by an overarching commitment to Christian values. All work exceptionally

hard to sustain school improvement, raise levels of self-esteem amongst children and support families within the community. Close-knit relationships between members of the St Mary's Church worship team, foundation governors and senior members of staff help to communicate the clear Christian vision of the school to all partners. As a result, all feel confident about their role in sharing the school's on-going development. There is a very clear sense that this is a team with a united view of the Christian purpose of the school. Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and are very supportive. Parents and pupils speak positively about the way the school seeks and values their views, for example through regular questionnaires. Self-evaluation materials have been highly successful in helping to determine the school's effectiveness as a church school. This was a point for action in the last denomination report. Potential church school leaders are encouraged and developed through effective delegation and by working within this strong church school community. Parents recognise that the school has distinctive Christian qualities and they are keen to support its strong Christian ethos because of the positive effect it has on their children.

SIAS report: April 2012: St. Mary's C E Primary School, Rushcroft Road, Shaw, OL2 7PP