



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St. Mary's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Adcombe Street
Off Alexandra Road
Manchester
M16 7AQ

Diocese: Manchester

Local authority: Manchester
Dates of inspection: 1 July 2014
Date of last inspection: July 2009
School's unique reference number: 105495
Headteacher: Jennifer McGarry
Inspector's name and number: Alan Beedie 61

School context

Since the last inspection, St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School has expanded into a two form entry school, and serves a very deprived and rapidly changing inner city community. The proportion of children entitled to free school meals is well above the national average. The proportion of children whose first language is not English is well above the national average. The percentage of children with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities is above the national average. The vast majority of children enter the school with very low attainment for their age. The school holds the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award. They also hold the National Standard for Enterprise Education and are winners of the TES 2013 Enterprise and Community Award and 2014 Primary School of the Year Award.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- The school is a cohesive, confident community in which faith lies at the heart of ensuring each person's rights are respected, and responsibilities carried out.
- Because of the caring Christian environment of the school, children make exceptionally good progress from their starting points.
- The headteacher and leaders in the school are unwavering in their commitment to achieving the very best for every child.
- All members of the school community recognise the significant part the school plays in developing their well-being and achievement.

arThe 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 explain how key Christian values relate to their rights and responsibilities, and these values are evident across the curriculum and in the daily life of the school. The achievement and progress of pupils from their starting points is exceptionally high. For example, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are consistently achieving in the top 20% of schools in reading and mathematics, with good and improving results in writing. Children newly arrived in the UK and those who have been in danger of exclusion before moving to St Mary's both make rapid progress in their learning and behaviour. The high level of teaching and learning, the attention to attendance, and the rewarding of good behaviour result in an outstanding learning environment, in which all children thrive. The Christian character of the school has a significant impact on the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, due to the school's emphasis on rights and responsibilities and the effectiveness of the community cohesion. Children are welcomed whatever their faith and background, and the curriculum is highly effective in supporting the development of social conscience and multi-cultural awareness. Relationships in the school are very strong and based on Christian love. There is a strong supportive ethos amongst staff members, which allows them to develop within a context where risk-taking is encouraged. Parents say 'the school feels like home, like a family,' and senior staff are 'not just ticking the boxes, as I have seen my child's tolerance grow.' The school community is very diverse and children are encouraged by the Rights Respecting School approach to respect those of all backgrounds. Children are given an excellent understanding of the world in which they live and of their place in making it better. In a Year 5 lesson on the theme 'I am somebody', children learned about the needs of street children in Brazil and linked this to previous work on Black History and to the World Cup. The children were clearly moved by this, and willingly responded to the opportunity to show Christian compassion through support of Save the Children. Religious Education makes a highly effective contribution to the school's distinctive Christian ethos and the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children show an excellent understanding of a range of world faiths, and they show respect for all religious practice.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.

The daily act of collective worship is central to the life of the school and all members of the school community play an enthusiastic part. The themes chosen are planned around the seasons of the church year, religious festivals and key events. The school's deep commitment to the UNICEF Children's Charter of Rights is skilfully linked to Christian values and experience, producing worship which is inspiring and engaging. On the day of the inspection, the worship was based on the right voted by the children as the most important: 'Your right to follow your own religion.' The headteacher used prepared video clips of members of staff explaining their own faith and invited chosen children to contribute their own thoughts. Highly effective use was made of sharing ideas with a talk partner, and of silence and reflection, on 'love for each other and love for God'. Worship regularly includes Biblical material and Christian teaching and relates strongly to core Christian values such as love, peace, forgiveness, respect and humility. Teachers ensure that prayer and reflection are built into worship time. Children are invited to lead prayer and to write their own prayers for inclusion in worship. In class, the children request prayers for particular needs, and teachers make use of class prayer and music. There is a 'Safe Haven' room which children can choose to use as a place to calm down when agitated, or to be quiet and reflect. This provides an excellent opportunity to deepen the children's spiritual development. Jesus Christ is given prominence in worship and children have a good understanding of his significance in Christian belief. Staff, clergy and children all play a part in the creation both of the overall structure and themes of worship and of day to day planning and leading of worship. Senior leaders regularly review the

effectiveness of collective worship in order to enrich and develop the worshipping life of the school.

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

All leaders consistently articulate and embody a deeply held Christian vision for the children to be 'the best they can be'. This is based on a 'can do' philosophy which recognises every child as precious in God's sight. As a result, the whole community has an absolute belief in every child's potential to achieve exceptionally well. Foundation governors ensure that the school develops its distinctive Christian ethos through away days during which they engage with all members of the school community. The priorities arrived at then feed into the school priorities for improvement, and these are monitored in governors' meetings. Parents talk about how deeply they value the way the school leaders 'go the extra mile.' For example, members of key agencies such as housing and health, in the 'Under One Roof' event, provide practical support for parents. Leaders, governors and staff have built a strong family ethos in which every child is welcomed and loved. As a result, they challenge barriers to children's success, such as low attendance, and take practical steps to ensure they are eliminated. Children and families unanimously agree that great emphasis is put on the whole child so that their needs are quickly identified and addressed. International Women's Day is used as a vehicle every year to promote the rights of women, and is truly inclusive of the whole community. Leaders ensure that the school meets statutory requirements for Religious Education and Collective Worship. School leaders continue to drive forward school improvement, and to involve a wide range of stakeholders in planning how the school's work can be extended and deepened. School leaders have a track record of 'growing their own leaders,' based on the high priority given to staff training, and nurturing talent and potential. The school has developed an effective link with Mumbai in India via the Concerns Universe Foundation. Together with other work such as Fairtrade and Changeover Day, teachers are ensuring that the children have a rounded understanding both of the diversity in their own community, and of global concerns, including empowering women and children in Mumbai.

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