

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Aston All Saints Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School

Lodge Lane
Aston
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S26 2BL

Diocese: Sheffield

Local authority: Rotherham
Dates of inspection: 6th March 2012
Date of last inspection: 5th and 7th December 2006
School's unique reference number: 106938
Headteacher: Mrs S Mellor
Inspector's name and number: Mrs L Patterson (310)

School context

Aston All Saints is an average sized primary school with 211 pupils, with very few from ethnic minority backgrounds. There are fewer than average pupils eligible for free school meals. The current building is just over 40 years old and is predominantly open-plan. The parish church is roughly half a mile from the school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Aston All Saints as a Church of England school is outstanding.

Christian values underpin every aspect of the life of this outstanding church aided school which is having a significant impact not only on pupils but everyone involved in the school. The quality of relationships observed during the inspection is outstanding making all members of the school community feel valued and special. Everyone is aware of the Christian foundation of the school and even the youngest children have a concept of what that means and the significance of the cross on the school logo. Children are proud of their school, are very well behaved, welcoming and polite.

Established strengths

- An outstanding, caring Christian environment which is having a significant impact on learners.
- Relationships between staff and learners, among learners, between staff and in the wider community are excellent.
- Exceptional, mutually supportive links with the local parish.

Focus for development

- Involve pupils more in the planning and delivery of worship.
- Formalise the assessment of the impact of worship on those in attendance.
- Action the areas identified in the school development plan regarding religious education.

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

The very strong Christian ethos permeates every aspect and dimension of the life of the school including relationships, documentation and classroom practice. This has a significant impact on all those involved in the school, especially pupils. The quality of care and the valuing of the individual observed during the inspection are both outstanding. Adults in the school are all making a very positive contribution to the school as a Christian community resulting in pupils who are well behaved, polite, confident and very welcoming. There is a very purposeful and orderly atmosphere within the school. Pupils are shown respect and kindness by adults and there are opportunities to discuss issues, as one child commented 'there's always somebody there if you just want to talk about anything'. Pupils stated that they felt that they were listened to and that their concerns were taken seriously. A parent commented that 'anything raised is dealt with quickly'. Collaborative working is a feature of the school and pupils appreciate the

efforts made on their behalf, especially regarding such positive experiences as trips out of school and the very well organised residential school journey to Filey. Parents commented that their children were 'nurtured by the staff and older children' and that they 'really appreciate the genuine open door policy with any member of staff or the head'. Pupils have a 'voice' which they feel listened to and is taken seriously through the effective and active school council. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are happy to take every opportunity offered to them.

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

Worship occupies a central place in the life of the school, providing opportunities for pupils and staff, who all attend, to greatly further their spiritual development through listening, song, prayer and times of reflection. This is especially true of the regular Eucharist services. Everyone involved in these services comments positively about the experience. Parents said that 'it makes you feel lovely inside' and 'it's become part of our year, especially at Christmas'. Pupils were equally as positive 'the Eucharist rounds off each half term really well' and 'Eucharist is just really special'. In worship there is an atmosphere of respect and reverence, especially at times of prayer. Prayer is a strong feature of the school with some opportunities for children to write their own prayers for use in the Eucharist services, which happen at the end of every half term. Music is used to good effect with the recorder group effectively accompanying the singing. Music and song are making a significant impact on spiritual development and enjoyment of the worship. Pupils say that they enjoy coming together for worship but they would like to be more involved in the planning and delivery of worship both within school and in the Eucharist services. There is currently no formal monitoring or evaluation of the impact of the worship on pupils. Pupils are familiar with many aspects of Anglican liturgy as the Eucharist services have a commentary by pupils on the significance of each element.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

Religious education is viewed as an important part of the life of the school. The quality of teaching and learning was at least good in the lessons observed enabling pupils to achieve levels of attainment equivalent to other core subject areas. The co-ordination of the subject has very recently been taken over by the headteacher due to the retirement of the previous leader. The leadership of the subject continues to be very effective. After much research, consideration and discussion the school adopted the Rotherham Agreed Syllabus in September. This is being closely monitored and will be reviewed at the end of the year by all staff and stakeholders. A very successful RE week was held when parents could join in lessons to increase knowledge and awareness of the new work. Feedback was very positive including 'how the children understood the story and how they could relate it to their own lives' and 'it was interesting to see how the ethos of the school has given the children a clear understanding of their religion as well as that of other faiths'. RE is currently a school priority and there is a clear understanding of the future steps needed to be taken. Pupils are enthused by the exciting range of teaching strategies. Good knowledge and understanding is demonstrated in many areas by staff who clearly enjoy teaching the subject. Children can demonstrate a good understanding of Christianity and other world faiths and they are gaining skills in empathy, demonstrated by their charity work, expression, reflection and questioning.

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

The quality leadership provided by the headteacher and governors contributes significantly to the success of this very effective church aided primary school. One parent said that the headteacher is 'one of the most approachable people I have ever met – really part of the community'. She is highly committed and succeeds in drawing everyone into a shared vision that delivers high quality education for children in an organisation which is inspired by Christian values. The school is providing a warm, welcoming and caring environment inspired by Christian values. There is an excellent supportive team spirit and all staff feel valued and appreciated. This is having a very positive impact on pupils. Adults are excellent role models and provide inspiration for the high expectations of behaviour, care and respect for the individual which are all strong characteristics of the school. There are very strong, productive and mutually supportive links with the local parish. The vicar is an effective chair of the governing body and is a very familiar figure in school. Governors actively support the school and come into school whenever possible. Parents express considerable satisfaction with the school as a church school saying such things as 'I love the values and traditions you get here', 'if you want it (the church) it's there, lots of it' and 'it's just like a big school church family'. Here the Christian ethos is really at the heart of everything they do.

