

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Dalton St Michael's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Higher Lane  
Dalton  
Wigan  
WN8 7RP

#### **Diocese: Liverpool**

Local authority: Lancashire

Dates of inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> April 2012

Date of last inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> July 2009

School's unique reference number: 119493

Headteacher: Mrs Adele Robinson

Inspector's name and number: Mr Stephen Paul Adnitt - 590

#### **School context**

Dalton St Michael's CE Primary School is a small rural school with sixty one pupils on roll. All the pupils come from white British backgrounds. The socio-economic background of the pupils is very mixed. Approximately one fifth of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion with learning difficulties is broadly average.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Dalton St Michael's as a Church of England school are good**

The school provides a good and supportive Christian environment which contributes well to pupil's spiritual and moral development. Pupils are happy and they care for each other. The school is a very loving Christian community in which all are valued and feel they are special. Strong Christian values and a nurturing environment underpin all that the school does and this has a positive effect upon the personal development of all pupils.

#### **Established strengths**

- The welcoming nature of this Christian community where all pupils and staff are valued and nurtured
- The daily act of worship which is central to the life of the school
- The quality of relationships which supports the Christian ethos of the school
- The strong Christian leadership of the headteacher, who is well supported by staff and governors

#### **Focus for development**

- Improve the assessment procedures to develop a whole school progression of skills in RE
- Ensure that parents are aware of what makes the school distinctly Christian and that they are involved in evaluating its impact on pupils' spiritual development
- Provide further opportunities for pupils to plan and lead collective worship as part of the regular school programme

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

The school provides a supportive environment which contributes well to the pupils' spiritual and moral development. Christian values underpin the whole ethos of the school and they are at the heart of the school's mission statement. The pupils are proud of their school and speak confidently about why it is special to them. They reflect on their behaviour and they are able to explain how their actions impact upon others and talk about moral conduct in relation to Christian principles. Christian values are referred to and responded to regularly in worship and throughout the everyday life of the school. Pupils and staff refer to the values as a matter of course. Pupils are able to articulate values and give examples of children and role models in school who are showing them in their everyday lives. Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. They are able to demonstrate a good understanding of how to resolve any differences which arise and of the need to consider the feelings of others. One pupil stated, 'We are all a family in this school and we all co-operate with each other.' Conflicts

within school are dealt with speedily and with a focus on the need for apologies, respect and considered reflection. Pupils are actively encouraged to participate in activities that make them more aware of situations that others face. They are also given opportunities to work with the local community. The school environment strongly promotes the church school distinctiveness. Displays are prominent and interactive and this has a very positive effect upon pupils' spiritual development and the ethos of the school. Classrooms and other areas around school, including the hall, have reflective corners and displays to constantly remind pupils that God is with them through their whole day.

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

A key strength of the school is the daily act of worship which is central to the working life of the school and in which all members of the community are involved. Pupils, staff and parents enjoy worship, interact during the worship and benefit from the discussions. Worship has a positive impact on the school community and pupils value it and articulate their views readily. An atmosphere of spiritual depth is created where the presence of God is widely acknowledged and celebrated. Pupils behave well in worship, listen attentively and sing with enthusiasm. Pupils speak enthusiastically about worship and it clearly has a positive impact on pupils' moral and spiritual development. One pupil remarked, 'Worship is exciting. It makes you think and consider.' Acts of worship are well planned, recorded and evaluated. The worship incorporates themes that are pertinent to the life of the school and the church calendar. Time set aside for quiet reflection helps the pupils to think about the part they can play in the life of the school. Opening sentences, prayer responses and the use of the Lords prayer help pupils to recognize and experience elements of Anglican tradition. Pupils are eager to take part in discussions relating to worship and feel that their views are valued. A recent initiative has been the formation of a worship group to evaluate worship that has taken place in school. This has led to pupils being more involved in planning and leading worship and a growth in their understanding of the value and worth of worship. One pupil commented, 'Worship is something we can all share in, its part of the life of this school.'

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

Dalton St Michael's follows the Liverpool Diocesan RE Scheme. Pupils make average progress across the key stages and are at standards appropriate to their age and similar to those in the core subjects. RE supports the pupils in developing their moral and spiritual awareness. Pupils have an enthusiasm for and enjoy RE and talk excitedly about their favourite topics. They behave well and work independently. They are proud of their work. They speak confidently and feel empowered to express their views. Religious and cultural diversity is valued and some progress has been made to ensure that the pupils learn about other faiths. Pupils make satisfactory progress in RE and show some understanding through their questioning, reflection and written work. A range of teaching strategies are used. Where there is pace and challenge teaching is good. In an upper key stage 2 lesson good use was made of the interactive whiteboard and appropriate questioning helped pupils engage in shared discussion about the meaning of Pentecost. Assessment procedures are not as yet fully developed to provide a whole school progression of skills in RE that involve all pupils. This was a focus for development in the previous inspection report.

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

The headteacher leads by example and her personal Christian values permeate the life of the school. The ethos is calm, happy and purposeful. She has a strong Christian vision for the school and she is well supported in this by the governing body. There are effective monitoring and evaluation processes in place for its self evaluation as a church school, which is linked well to school improvement planning. Further details with regard to church school evaluation should now be shared with all members of the school family in order to fully involve them in improving this church school further. An area of the School Improvement Plan is related to the Christian character of the school and the links with St Michael and All Angels church. The headteacher is well supported by the governing body who are committed to working to improve the school. They are rightly proud of their school. Virtually all parents, pupils and other members of the school community speak positively of the way in which the school seeks and values their views. Parents' views are sought on a regular basis and pupils feel comfortable in expressing their opinions and suggestions. Senior staff have undertaken relevant training and the senior teacher has attended church school leadership training. Links between school and St Michael's church are strong and growing stronger and the vicar is a

regular visitor to school. Pupils say they value his visits. The headteacher and senior teacher alongside the governors have a vision for future school priorities linked to church school distinctiveness.

SIAS report April 2012 Dalton, St Michael CE Primary. WN8 7RP