

Latchford St James' Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Old Road
Latchford
Warrington
WA4 1AP

Diocese: Chester

Local authority: Warrington

Dates of inspection: 6th November, 2012

Date of last inspection: 30th November, 2007

School's unique reference number: 132247

Head teacher: Mrs J Wightman

Inspector's name and number: Georgina Lewis (401)

School context

Latchford St James' Church of England school is an average size primary school in an urban situation. It serves an area of mainly terraced, housing association properties with pockets of deprivation. There is a higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs and a growing number of pupils from minority ethnic communities. Approximately 25% of pupils have free school meals but not all parents take up their entitlement. The school changed its name recently to reflect its relationship with the church, and its historical background as the first Sunday school founded in the eighteenth century.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Latchford St James' Church of England Primary school as a Church of England school are good

The leadership and dedication of the head teacher and governors in providing a model of Christian living is apparent in many aspects of the school. The environment provides pupils with a rich spiritual, cultural and moral setting where all are valued and achievement is celebrated. Art work in the school is inspirational, providing outstanding opportunities for spiritual and cultural development to support its Christian ethos

Established strengths

- The commitment and dedication of the head teacher and the governing body to improvement as a church school
- The quality of the links with the church and other partners
- The excellent art work which contributes to the outstanding spiritual, moral, social, cultural and emotional development of pupils.

Focus for development

- Greater use of pupils' evaluation of collective worship to inform future planning
- Links with parents and carers in line with the school self evaluation

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

In the entrance to the school, banners declare the school's adherence to Christian values and provide a clear message about its Christian foundation. The pupils at the school have a very clear understanding of its Christian character from an early age. It is founded on Christian Values which are demonstrated in the calm and harmonious atmosphere, very supportive relationships and outstanding behaviour. Respect for the individual is paramount.

Support for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language ensures that they make good and sometimes outstanding progress from a low starting point. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding as a result of the opportunities to explore other cultures and faiths. High expectations in teaching and learning result in pupils making good progress. Pupils' work is celebrated in the many excellent displays both within classrooms and around the school. Foundation governors have arranged activities such as 'Messy Church' and a number of 'Experiences' at Easter, Christmas and Harvest to broaden understanding of Christian values for both pupils and their parents. These have been well received and more parents are now more aware of its Christian foundation and the values which underpin the teaching and learning. Out of school clubs also contribute to pupils' spiritual development. The school recognises that there needs to be better communication with some parents and carers, and also hard to reach groups, and is exploring ways to improve newsletters.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

There is a well written policy for collective worship which sets out aims and principles firmly based on Christian values. There is a good framework for all collective worship, which allows for the flexibility to respond to current issues, within the planned themes. The leadership of collective worship by the head teacher is an exemplar on which others may model. A variety of stimuli in acts of collective worship, which are interactive and involve pupils, are used to ensure concentration and interest. There is opportunity for reflection, and clear links are made to the Bible and Jesus' teaching. Pupils are familiar with the Anglican tradition through regular visits to the church for specific celebrations and the Eucharist. Pupils' response to collective worship is enthusiastic and reverential. The setting for collective worship includes an amazing wall hanging as a back drop, a table with a cross and the 'Praying Hands' and a candle. It provides an atmosphere of quiet contemplation and an impressive focal point, supporting the special place of worship within the school. The theme of 'Remembrance', for the collective worship seen, provided a range of opportunities for pupils to participate. Links were made between the sacrifice of members of the armed forces and Jesus' sacrifice for us. The lighting of a Peace candle during time for reflection encouraged pupils to see beyond conflict and prayers said by year 2 pupils were for peace. The local incumbent and foundation governors are involved in the delivery of collective worship. Recent projects included 'Experience Harvest' during which pupils, parents and carers participated in activities in church. There is a special place in church for the school to display its work. This enhances the Christian values of the school and strengthens links with the church and its congregation. There is monitoring and evaluation of collective worship; however, the evaluation by pupils is not at present used in planning for future acts of worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious education (RE) is well planned and carefully monitored by the head teacher and foundation governors. The curriculum includes the study of Christianity, Judaism and Islam. RE makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The presentation of the work seen is impressive. There is good progression in individual pupils' work and across key stages. Standards are in line with other core subjects. Pupils not only gain knowledge and understanding but also demonstrate what they have learned from RE and how it has impacted upon them. The Year two lesson was outstanding in the atmosphere of quiet contemplation created. Pupils responded well to the stimulus provided and showed their very clear understanding of angels as messengers. As part of an RE lesson on 'Faith', Year 6 pupils watched an extract from the 'Open Doors' charity web site about persecuted Christian children. Pupils were obviously disturbed and saddened by what they saw. The sympathy and feelings shown, demonstrated how they had learned how individual belief is to be respected, and prompted discussion about suffering for faith. There

are 'class books' which collate a number of pupils' work, which are displayed in church, further enhancing the links with the church. Class books demonstrate the effectiveness of teaching and the obvious enjoyment pupils have of religious education. Teachers use a range of teaching methods which ensures that interest is maintained and basic skills improved. Pupils are given a variety of opportunities to explore their own beliefs as well those of other faiths. Some of the pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds explained how their faith affects their lives. This gives pupils actual experiences from life and makes the study of Islam more real. Visitors to the school make a valuable contribution to pupils' religious education. The clubs available also provide opportunities for further study of faith. There is a very good marking policy which ensures teachers take pupils further in their learning. Questions at the end of pieces of work are often responded to by pupils before the next piece of work, demonstrating how seriously pupils take their teacher's comments as part of the learning process. The school has identified the need for more consistent use of assessment data to inform teaching and learning.

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

The leadership of the head teacher, together with the support and challenge of governors, leads to very effective management of the school. It ensures a clear shared vision and effective strategic development. There are regular reviews of the school improvement planning and policies to ensure a distinctive Christian education, firmly based on Christian values, is delivered. This is well supported in the school's policies, self evaluation and the environment created for teaching and learning. The focus for development from the previous inspection, 'Secure shared leadership across the school, so that all are enabled to move forward in clear roles', has been fully met. A member of the Senior Leadership team and a foundation governor are now involved in the leadership of the school as a church school. The foundation governors have been instrumental in improving links with the church and community, creating more opportunities for parent involvement through the initiatives they have led. The opportunities for cultural development are impressive, enhancing pupils' awareness of other cultures through visits and exchanges with schools in Spain and China. Pupils are proud of their school and their achievements are celebrated. They were chosen to go to London with their banner to celebrate the 200th Anniversary of the founding of the National Society. Pupils are involved in their local community, singing at local care homes and in the town. Pupils support charitable organisations, and there are 'eco warriors' who are very keen stewards of the environment. The school council has been involved in an Anti - Bullying presentation to the governors and the change from the teaching of French to Spanish was instigated by pupils. This is a school where all have a role in improving the quality of the experience for everybody involved.

SIAS report November, 2012 Latchford St James Church of England Primary School, Old Road, Latchford, Warrington AW4 1AP