

**Millfields Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Willington Avenue  
Eastham  
Wirral  
CH62 9EB

**Diocese: Chester**

Local authority: Wirral  
Dates of inspection: 29 February 2012  
Date of last inspection: N/A  
School's unique reference number: 136056  
Headteacher: Mrs Michelle Holford  
Inspector's name and number: Mr Ian Newton 273

**School context**

Millfields Church of England Primary School was opened in September 2010 when the community school on the same site changed its status. Most pupils come from the housing estate near the school. The number entitled to free school meals and those with special needs and/or disabilities is higher than average. Changes to the governing body have been made to reflect the school's religious foundation.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Millfields Church of England Controlled Primary School as a Church of England school are good**

The school has made good progress since its opening to develop its Christian distinctiveness. The values that are promoted are based on Christian teaching and are welcomed and understood even by those who do not have a religious belief or affiliation. These are reflected in the good relationships that exist amongst members of the school community. The good leadership of the school has been key to the developments achieved thus far.

**Established strengths**

- The commitment of the school community to embrace the school's change of status.
- The links with the parish and other local denominations.
- The strong links between collective worship and classroom practice.

**Focus for development**

- Develop evaluation of collective worship to inform future planning.
- Involve children in the planning and leading of collective worship.
- During acts of collective worship, build in time for reflection.

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

The school has made significant progress in developing a distinctive Christian character in the eighteen months since its changed status. Parents and older pupils stated that they could see the change in the school's character since the adoption of its church school status. Prominence has been given to collective worship, religious education and the links with the parish and other local denominations. Children are fully aware of the school's new status through the values that are encouraged and the environment they enjoy. For example, all classes had produced large friezes either about one of the miracles or some aspect of Judaism, which filled the corridors. To celebrate the schools' new status, all of the children were involved in creating a cross which is displayed in the foyer, and all classrooms have an area for reflection and a cross. A memorial garden also gives opportunities for children to have some time and space for reflection in their busy day. The incumbent supports the

school through her regular visits, leading collective worship and giving pastoral support when required. Parents valued the benefits of having a church school, particularly in relation to the ideas and values that were promoted and to which children were exposed. It is a happy school where children feel safe. Staff care for the children well. They are adaptable and good at meeting individuals' needs in a sensitive way. If there is a problem, both pupils and parents feel that the school embraces the issue and deals with it satisfactorily and with a sense of immediacy. The Christian values that the school promotes support spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Children are conscious of the need to support others who may be in a situation of need both in the United Kingdom and further afield. They do this through fund raising for a local children's hospice, the sponsoring of a child who lives in a third world country and food collected and distributed at harvest time. Through the incumbent, a link is being developed with a school in the Solomon Islands which, if successful, will develop their awareness further. Good curriculum links are also made to support children's awareness. For example some of the older children were studying a book about a boy who worked in a carpet factory in Asia and the school is involved with a project organised by UNICEF which focuses on children's rights. Religious Education (RE) supports children's understanding of these issues well giving opportunities for learning about some of the other world religions. Children are able to share their thoughts, aspirations and good news through a number of mechanisms around the school. Relations at all levels are good. There is a well developed rewards system which children understand well. Staff invest considerable time and effort to ensure that there are good relationships amongst pupils. Children enjoy the responsibilities that they are given, for example, there is a peer mediation scheme whose aims are to resolve any difficulties that arise between children and a scheme where some children will befriend those that do not have anyone to play with.

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

The school sees collective worship as an uplifting time. It is an opportunity for everyone to come together to encounter traditions and beliefs, provide opportunities for stillness and reflection and to develop personally, socially and spiritually. Children enjoy collective worship because it is varied with different people leading it each day. There are generally two strands to the school's approach to collective worship. It adapts the themes in the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) project and links them to Christian teaching whilst a team from the local church leads weekly worship on a Biblical theme. There is a strong link between collective worship and classroom practice with themes explored in worship further developed in the classroom. For example, displays and work developed on the theme of miracles. Children said they learned about Jesus, people in the Bible, heard stories and had the opportunity to pray. Some good practice exhibited by the school was that time was built into the curriculum for children to discuss what they experienced when they returned to class. The act of collective worship that was observed was led by the incumbent and involved the whole school. She has a very good rapport with the children. The idea of looking at oneself during Lent was explored and this was linked with how special each one of us is to God. She successfully used the parable of Jesus healing sick people to show children what sort of person Jesus was and how He made them feel good about themselves. Children were enthusiastic singers and some were willing volunteers who acted out parts of the story. Whilst they were led in prayer, there was not an opportunity for them to have time for reflection. Parents value the collective worship that the school offers their children. They feel that it was important because children learn values which guide them in their lives and also gain knowledge and understanding of the Christian and other faiths. They also appreciate the fact that the children go to the parish church for major festivals.

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

Rapid progress has been made by the school to reflect its change of status and develop a distinctive Christian character which has been enthusiastically embraced by the school's leadership and governance team. Pupils and parents are clear about the values the school is promoting. A high priority for the school was the formulation and adoption of its mission statement as a church school which talks of a "secure Christian environment." Parents interpret this in terms of knowledge and understanding of values based on Christian teaching, showing kindness and respect to others and being safe. There was a feeling from a number

of parents and governors that, with Millfields adopting voluntary controlled status and becoming the local church school, barriers in the community had been broken down which had led to greater community cohesion. The school tries hard to develop its relationships. It quickly saw the benefits of what the Diocesan Board of Education could offer and has received good support particularly in relation to what the change of status meant for the school community. Governors have availed themselves of training offered and further development is planned. Whilst the school has an "open door" policy and generally good relations with the parent body, it has had limited success in involving parents although this is something that is being further developed. Links with the parish and other local churches are positive with activities offered at some of the churches being promoted through the school. There are also good relationships with other schools in the area with joint projects being organised and some resources and services being accessed. The senior leadership team and governing body promote opportunities for staff to take on new challenges. The senior team are involved in a leadership and management course and some staff have completed a course for middle managers. Relevant staff have also attended diocesan conferences for head teachers and deputy head teachers. Given that the school is in the early stages of its development as a church school, self evaluation for the church school aspects are not strong. However, they are better than they think they are in relation to collective worship and leadership and management. They work hard to adhere to their mission statement on a daily basis and their motto – 'Faith, Respect, Courtesy & Endeavour' – is evident throughout all aspects of school life.

SIAS report February 2012 Millfields CE Controlled Primary Eastham CH63 9EB