



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St. Oswald's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School,

Mayfield Road,
Ashbourne,
Derbyshire,
DE6 1AS.

Diocese: Derby

Local authority: Derbyshire

Dates of inspection: May 8th 2014

Date of last inspection: March 31st 2009

School's unique reference number: 112796

Headteacher: Mrs Rebecca Wood

Inspector's name and number: Alison Woodhouse 777

School context

St. Oswald's is a small infant school with 112 pupils on roll, split into 4 classes. The school has two buildings, one housing the hall and an office. Pupils come from a range of social backgrounds, most are of White British heritage, with 17.8 % of pupils eligible for pupil premium. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is 13 % and 5.3 % of pupils have English as an additional language. The leadership of the school is currently shared with the Headteacher being in school on Monday to Thursday and the deputy Headteacher being in school on Fridays.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Oswald's as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- Leadership at all levels, including the Headteacher, governors, RE co-ordinator and teachers, have worked together well so that the school's Christian distinctiveness is clearly known and valued.
- Collective worship is inspirational and inclusive, impacting very well on spiritual development across the school community.
- High quality Religious Education strongly impacts children's understanding of Christian values and Anglican traditions.
- Prayer has an important and significant place in the life of the school, enabling pupils to reflect and pray at appropriate times.

Areas to improve

- Extend child led collective worship and ensure worship has a stronger focus on God as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit so that learners can recognise and express this with understanding.
- Raise awareness of diversity and difference, both within Christianity and other faith communities.

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

The Christian character of the school has a significant impact on the academic achievement, spiritual and personal development which contributes to the well-being of learners regardless of their ability or background. It is evident that the 'learning and growing together,' component of the mission statement genuinely ensures that 'Christian values are followed to foster every child.' The impact of this on achievement is demonstrated through the school's internal tracking systems, where all pupils are supported through personalised learning to reach their full potential. Parents confirm that the schools' Christian foundation provides a good learning environment where 'there is a commitment to each child to develop their full potential.' Behaviour is excellent, underpinned by a behaviour policy and an ethos policy clearly supporting the school's values. Collective worship and Religious Education (RE) are based on biblical teaching and they are strong components of the distinctive Christian character of the school. The impact of this means that learners are enabled to make links between Christian values and biblical teaching and this was evident across the whole school. Impressive RE teaching enabled pupils throughout the school to be engaged and reflective when interacting with stories from the Bible. Prayer is central to the school. Pupils regularly contribute to prayer trees which form part of a reflection area in each class. Outside, the spiritual garden, presents opportunities for reflection and prayer, enriching the Christian ethos and ensuring genuine opportunities for all stakeholders to reflect, pray and develop their spirituality. The development point from the previous inspection: 'to produce a prospectus which reflects a strong Christian ethos,' is now clearly embedded and has been extended to a variety of school documents. One parent said 'school puts God at the forefront and children learn stories from the Bible,' which is supported half termly by an RE leaflet the pupils take home. Parents appreciated this because it provided a talking point at home and felt RE contributes to the Christian character of the school. It is clear that St. Oswald's has an excellent, distinctively Christian, reputation in the community with another parent commenting 'you never see an unhappy child come out of St. Oswald's.'

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The impact of the high quality collective worship is readily and clearly articulated by learners, parents and staff. Staff commented on enjoying a sense of 'togetherness, calm and reflection,' from being involved in collective worship daily. All stakeholders talk about the variety of providers and settings; for example different church members leading worship in school and the frequency of worship for the whole school in church. Pupils, parents and staff all are motivated by the 'citizenship' award which is clearly linked to the Christian ethos policy of the school. Any member of staff can nominate a pupil for the citizen's award when they have observed a caring and positive attitude towards someone else. Such an award enables pupils from a young age to understand the impact of their behaviours and to put Christian teachings into practice. Collective worship has been planned and evaluated by the whole school community, and ideas for improvement have been actioned. There are many positive comments about worship which demonstrate the positive impact it has on the members of the community, parents said: 'The exceptional loving, caring ethos is clearly the corner stone of all school policy,' with another commenting on the impact at home: 'My child talks about collective worship. She enjoys the close links with St Oswald's church.' Themes for both collective worship and RE are planned well in advance by the collective worship co-ordinator and clergy. Themes reflect Anglican practice, providing the opportunity to explore a Bible passage or character. Throughout the school there is time for reflection and an opportunity to express thoughts, feelings and beliefs as reflection areas are prominent in each classroom, outside and in the hall. Prayer is a key part of these reflection areas and pupils readily articulate

how and when they use these areas. One boy said 'if someone's pet dies then you can reflect and write a prayer for them.' St. Oswald's church is an integral part of the life of the school. Relationships, services, prayer and community support are interwoven between the school and the church, with church members representing a key part of the governing body. Major Christian festivals and special times in the church year are celebrated in conjunction with the parish church and these are significant times in bringing the wider school community together.

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

The strong leadership and management team at St. Oswald's Infants celebrate their Christian vision and values and encourage the whole school community to do likewise. Parents, staff, governors and pupils speak highly of the Headteacher and her Christian vision for the school. The Headteacher consistently lives out and promotes a vision for the school that is rooted in Christian values. The impact of this is a distinctively Christian ethos ensuring that every child is nurtured to reach their full potential. Self-evaluation involves all groups within the school community with the Headteacher, foundation governors and staff taking a lead on ensuring Christian distinctiveness meets learners' needs. Christian values are lived out in the day to day life of the school – in lessons, behaviour and relationships. The previous inspection development point: 'to use the National Society toolkit as a development and evaluation tool for governors,' has become regular practice and is now an expected part of the school's self-evaluation. Staff development and training is clearly linked to the school development plan with regular training for RE and collective worship at the centre. This is continuing to embed the Christian vision and ensures induction and succession planning is clearly considered. Each part of the inclusive leadership team knows it makes a difference as distributed leadership enables all stakeholders to collectively embrace the school vision. The sense of community generated by the leadership and management team is not confined to the local area. Links with a school in India are beginning to show mutual benefits and aiding pupils' understanding of global communities. The Headteacher has also ensured a commitment to the Christian vision is shared in her work with other schools in the local community. In this collaboration, two other schools have worked alongside St. Oswald's to develop their values and vision. RE is given a high status in the school as was shown in a recent governor monitoring of RE. She commented that 'It is impressive to see the children's understanding of emotions, morals, relationships, respect and Christian teaching.' A highly effective partnership with St. Oswald's church demonstrates a focussed desire for the same positive outcomes for pupils in their care and there have been clear developments at St. Oswald's church in recent years. Since the last inspection the school has been featured in a Derby Diocesan newsletter as a good example of a foundation governor supporting the school's Christian ethos. One parent commented 'the links with the church give a strong community feel and our children are proud that St. Oswald's is their church.' This, combined with a real desire to look for ways to enrich the learning experiences of all pupils means the school has the capacity to improve, develop and grow even more as a Church school.

SIAMS report [May 2014] [St. Oswald's Church of England (VC) Infant School, Mayfield Road, Ashbourne, Derbyshire.] [DE6 IAS]

