

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Margaret's Church of England Primary School

Heys Lane,
Heywood,
Lancashire
OL10 3RD

Diocese:	Manchester
Local authority:	Rochdale
Dates of inspection:	10 th February 2011
Date of last inspection:	11 th March 2008
School's unique reference number:	105815
Headteacher:	Mrs Maxine Beresford
Inspector's name and number:	Mrs Carol Howard 437

School context

St Margaret's CE Primary School is slightly below national average in size with 202 pupils on roll. The catchment area is mixed, with a large number of pupils living in an area of high socio-economic disadvantage. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is much higher than national average and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also above average. Attendance is below national average but is now improving. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been in post for just over a year. The school has been awarded the Active Mark and Healthy Schools status.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Margaret's Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

The highly visible mission statement of the school "Growing spiritually together. Everybody matters and anything is possible", underpins and shapes the life and work of St Margaret's. A deep Christian ethos supports all aspects of learning and teaching. The headteacher's dedication, along with active support from staff, governors and clergy gives direction and focus to the ongoing development of St Margaret's as a faith school.

Established strengths

- Christian values underpin the work of the school;
- Inspirational displays strongly promote the Christian nature of the school;
- Children are proud of the work they do to support both local and international charities;
- Close interaction between the vicar and the school ensures the promotion of Christian values.

Focus for development

- Continue to monitor the strategic planning for marking and evaluating learning in RE;
- Continue to develop systems to ensure that children understand their targets in RE;
- Develop links with wider communities to support children's understanding of other faiths.

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

The school's good Christian ethos permeates all features of school life. Children speak of their school with pride and parents confirm that their children enjoy coming to St Margaret's where they are cared for and looked after. One parent described the school as "teaching through Christian values." Children's spiritual development is good and is strongly supported by the many excellent displays and reminders that promote the school's Christian character. Christian forgiveness is at the heart of the rewards and sanctions policy, enabling children to start each day afresh. Christian values, such as compassion and respect, are clearly shown by pupils through the friendly and courteous way they speak to staff, visitors and each other. Pupils say that they are respected and valued by staff. There are good relationships between adults and children based on shared values and this provides good support to pupils in their social and moral development. Pupils are very actively involved in supporting a range of local, national and international charities and at the time of the inspection were considering events they could organise for Red Nose Day. They have a clear understanding of the importance of sharing with others less fortunate than themselves. A prefect described the school as being "very giving". The personal development and well being of pupils is skilfully supported by the services of a learning mentor who helps both pupils and parents through a range of problems.

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

Collective worship has a good impact on the spiritual development of pupils and it plays an important role in the life of the school. Children clearly enjoy the experience of collective worship and the quiet respectful way that they enter and leave the hall shows that worship is held in high regard. Children focus well on the Christian message in worship with the aid of a cross, candle and projected images chosen by pupils in order to foster reflective thought. Children write and read their own prayers in both collective worship and in class and these demonstrate the good standard of spiritual development achieved by the school. Pupils know the Lord's Prayer, the Grace and the school prayer very well. All members of the school community sing with obvious enjoyment. The children have a good understanding of Christian beliefs and practices. For example, on the day of the inspection, they learnt well from the worship entitled 'God's Justice And The Need To Forgive', led by the vicar. The major events of the Christian calendar are celebrated both in school and in church, which children visit for worship on a weekly basis. Good relationships exist between the church and the school. The vicar is a regular visitor, taking acts of collective worship and helping older children develop soundly their understanding of the Anglican faith. The church is clearly seen as a learning resource for the school as well as being a place of worship. Collective acts of worship follow the 'Values for Life' scheme and in consequence, children gain a good moral and spiritual awareness. Worship is well planned, monitored and evaluated and good records are kept. Parents confirm that they and their children enjoy visiting church for collective worship and are very appreciative at being able to attend the class-led worship introduced this academic year.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

Children have a good understanding of the Christian faith that is studied in depth. They show a high level of commitment to religious education and scrutiny of work shows that standards are in line with national expectations. Their spiritual development is enhanced through highly effective interactive displays of pupils work, based on RE themes, which are prominent throughout the school. Pupils are making good progress in their knowledge, understanding and respect of other religions as a result of following the Manchester Diocese syllabus. Learning and teaching in the two lessons observed was good and strongly supported the values underpinning the school's distinctive Christian faith. For example, a Year One lesson drew on cross-curricular themes and involved excellent questions and answers to enable pupils to understand the significance of mezuzah and scrolls in Judaism compared with the Bible in Christianity. Year Six pupils were able to empathise with the feeling and emotions of others and discuss at a deep level the Christian perspective on hunting and culling. The children's own ideas and suggestions were an essential part of the learning experience and were celebrated. The children's knowledge of Bible stories found in the Old and New Testaments is good. Reflection, questioning and discussion are used in a highly effective way so that pupils are totally involved and keen to answer questions. Further opportunities to visit other places of worship and meet with members of other faiths would enrich this aspect of the RE syllabus. The subject is very well resourced and appropriate time is allocated to the subject, showing that it is highly valued in the curriculum by governors, parents, pupils and staff. RE is well led by an enthusiastic subject leader. She is keen and able to support staff by extending her own and her colleagues subject knowledge. The short, medium and long-term planning of RE both in the discreet subject and across the curriculum is good. This academic year she has introduced a new system of levelling work using a comprehensive grid for learning about religions and learning from religion. This helps her identify areas for further development in order to raise standards. Scrutiny of books suggests that the system of monitoring and evaluating children's work is not fully in place

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

The school has a strong Christian ethos and the headteacher is dedicated to and effective in ensuring that this is at the heart of all school life. The headteacher leads by example, always showing enthusiasm, care and compassion. Interviews with staff, parents, pupils and governors confirm that, in the short time she has been in post, she has become highly respected. The school prospectus promotes the importance of the school's vision, based on Christian values. The strong Christian vision is evident in all of the school's documentation. Caring, respect, discipline and moral education are deep-seated within the school ethos. The school supports an active school council, which holds regular, recorded meetings. The children are proud of the work that they do and are responsible for a number of improvements in the play areas. The governing body benefits from an experienced chair of governors. Several governors are newly appointed members but there are currently two vacant Foundation Governors places. The governors, with support from the Diocese, are beginning to work well together and are very keen to do their best for the school. Governors are well aware of the importance of their role in raising standards and are firm in the belief that the Christian vision must be central to everything done in the school. Information regarding the Governors, headteacher and staff is clearly displayed on the school's well constructed website. Parents say that their views are listened to and that they feel valued. They describe the headteacher and staff as being "very approachable". The school has "a true open-door policy" and one parent remarked, "Children are taught through the Christian values of care and respect". Parents understand and support the work that the school is doing to develop the target setting process with the aim of involving children in improving their achievement. The school works well with other churches, schools and the local community on a range of celebrations throughout the year and in providing premises for the church uniformed organisations. This partnership between the church, school and the local community is very strong.