

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### St Oswald's CE Primary School

Ronald Ross Avenue  
Netherton  
L30 5RH

#### Diocese: Liverpool

Local authority: Sefton  
Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> May 2012  
Date of last inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> November 2007  
School's unique reference number: 104900  
Headteacher: Miss E Murtagh  
Inspector's name and number: Mrs L Sweeney 687

#### School context

St Oswald's CE Primary School is an average sized Voluntary Aided church school. It serves an area of socio-economic disadvantage. The proportion of disabled children and those with special educational needs is above average. The school has many awards including the Church School Partnership award, Healthy Schools status and full International School status. The school has undergone significant staffing changes in the last two years, as well as an extensive building programme.

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

The school's mission statement, 'Our School family, where all are valued, is centred on faith in Christ,' drives the work of the school. Careful consideration is given to the needs of every child and family and as a result they thoroughly enjoy all that the school has to offer. The school provides excellent inclusive practice both within school hours and through its well developed extended provision.

#### Established strengths

- The Christian vision and inspiring leadership by the headteacher, supported well by all staff and governors
- The outstanding relationships within school which are shared with the wider community
- The children's high level of understanding of and positive response to local, national and global issues

#### Focus for development

- Provide succession planning opportunities for the leadership of religious education (RE) and collective worship
- Work with the incumbent and governing body to achieve the second diocesan Church School Partnership Award

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

St Oswald's is a harmonious school that is viewed as an oasis of calm by the local community. Relationships at St Oswald's are of a very high quality. As a result, the children enjoy school and feel safe and welcome. One child said, 'We are all friends.' This is a view which parents share, and one commented, 'They never give up on a child.' Children make excellent progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding and have a thorough understanding of their role in local, national and global society. The governors are proud that there are many opportunities for the school to be actively involved in the local community. This is a role that everyone takes seriously through charity work. The children could talk in detail about their sponsorship of a boy in Brazil and the impact that this is having on his life. Parents are actively encouraged to join in many aspects of school life and this in turn helps to develop their own skills. Parents can see the positive results of the school's

focus on Gospel values in the children's behaviour. One parent also stated that the many first hand experiences which enrich the RE curriculum at the school had 'given the children opportunities that they wouldn't usually have.' The school's TREE project celebrates the children's vibrant response to the values at the heart of the school's Christian foundation. This Christian ethos permeates every aspect of school life from documentation and displays through to classroom practice. The school environment supports children to develop an individual spiritual awareness. They regularly say thank you to God. A simple prayer displayed in Year 2 prompted one child to say, 'Thank you for the way I am.'

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

Children and parents comment positively on the centrality of worship in school and their enjoyment in taking part. Firmly based on Christian values and the practices of the Church of England, the impact of worship is outstanding. This is because the governors have successfully achieved their goal of bringing the Church to the school. A foundation governor rightly acknowledged, 'the ethos of the school is felt by the families.' Anglican responses and symbols are used well and the children's singing is both powerful and contagious. Several parents commented that the younger children choose to continue singing their favourite hymn on the way home from school. All worship is thoughtfully planned and evaluated by the worship co-ordinator and is focused on a comprehensive system of Christian values which is fully understood by the children. Children in Year 6 appreciated the opportunity to reflect on their value of endurance with one child commenting, 'We've always had manners but this value has given us a deeper respect in preparation for high school.' On the day of the inspection the children in both key stages led significant elements of the class worship. One child stated, 'Class worship is special, I can join in more.' Children's prayers are on display throughout school and demonstrate the children's ability to reflect beyond the worship sessions. Church links are very strong. There is a very well established school Eucharist with high numbers of Year 6 children choosing to be confirmed. Both the parents and children love the mini-Church sessions and weekly after school worship club, Ozzies. Worship unites the school and wider community and one child rightly understood that, 'My school talks and listens together.'

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

Standards of teaching and learning within RE are good and children make excellent progress. The children are successfully encouraged to examine the differences religion makes in people's lives. Skilful questioning in a Year 2 lesson enabled the children to quickly understand symbolism associated with Pentecost and Ascension. The children went on to design their own symbols and one child chose the sun as, 'it gives us light and Jesus is the light of the world.' An extensive portfolio of children's work and regular whole school moderation ensures that the RE provided maximises achievement. This work has enabled the RE leader to ensure that there is a good balance in lessons between learning about religion and learning from religion. As a result of a rigorous audit of the subject earlier in the year, teachers' marking is now more focused on improving skills in RE rather than literacy skills. All year groups have a very clear understanding of the Christian faith. The school demonstrates a strong commitment to inclusion, with pupils recognising the need for respect and tolerance towards each other and those of other faith communities. One child stated, 'It is important to learn about other faiths and to understand them through different eyes.' The school provides many first hand experiences to complement the RE curriculum including a Year 6 visit to a Hindu Temple and study visits to China and Spain. The school uses ICT to good effect. One parent commented that she had learnt a lot about RE through her children and that her youngest child often chooses a Bible story as her favourite bedtime book.

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

The headteacher and governors promote a distinctive school vision based on Christian values with enthusiasm and understanding. The headteacher's Christian conviction shines through all aspects of her leadership and this contributes greatly to the success of the school as a Church school. All in the school community work exceptionally hard to sustain school improvement, support families and foster positive aspirations for children and parents. There

is a clear sense that the school is run by a team rather than by one individual. The school's work is not limited to school hours as there is an impressive menu of extended services that includes faith activities. RE and worship feature prominently in the school improvement plan. Areas for development from the previous report have been tackled thoroughly and successfully through the passionate leadership of the assistant headteacher. Less experienced colleagues are now ready to have a more dynamic role in supporting the vision as demonstrated in their eagerness to be fully involved on the inspection day. The links with the local church are very strong and the governors are well known by the children and parents. One foundation governor viewed it as the school's role to 'plant the seed.' This promotion of lifelong learning is helping the children on their religious and spiritual journey. Parents are keen to support the Christian ethos of the school because of the positive impact that it has on their children's lives. One parent stated, 'The children go to school happy and come home happy.' The children have a thorough understanding of the school's Christian foundation and the need to share this beyond the school grounds. One child summed it up by saying, 'our school is community friendly.'

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