

Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Matthias Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Cromwell Road, Malvern, Worcestershire. WR14 1NA.

Diocese: Worcester

Local authority: Worcestershire

Dates of inspection: 25th January 2010. Deferred inspection.

Date of last inspection: 27th - 28th March 2006

School's unique reference number: 116899

Headteacher: Mrs Claire Davies

Inspector's name and number: Janet Nesbitt 75

School context

The school name has changed since the last inspection, to better reflect its church status. 183 pupils currently attend the school from nursery to year six. Numbers of children with SEN are above average. St Matthias School was designated as requiring special measures by OFSTED in January 2009. The current headteacher has been in post from April 2009. Children come from a mixed socio-economic background and few belong to other faith backgrounds.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Matthias as a Church of England school are good.

St Matthias is a good church school. Its Christian distinctiveness has been retained and strengthened through a difficult time of change and challenge. Christian values strongly support pupil's moral, social, cultural and spiritual development. They influence behaviour and relationships throughout the school. Collective worship and religious education both make very good contributions to the distinctive Christian ethos of the school.

Established strengths

- Links with the local church and clergy are very productive, supporting pupil's learning exceptionally well.
- The headteacher, staff and governors show great determination to collaboratively develop and improve the school as a church school. They offer strong co-operative support to each other.

Focus for development

- Focus the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship on how its impact on pupils inspires and affirms them as children of God.
- Systematically develop and embed a range of assessment procedures in religious education in order to have confidence that learning is good and standards continue improving.

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

Pupils say that school is a happy and safe place. Teachers respect them, treating them fairly and equally. Christian values, well identified by pupils, have a good impact on their personal development. Children make a good contribution to improving their school. They show good initiative in caring for others in both the local and wider community, including strong links with Tanzania. Levels of good self esteem and confidence are observed. Parents talk about the qualities of the school that please them including its Christian ethos, good church links and family atmosphere. Learners talk about the importance of everyone and how Christian values help them to "*get on rather than fall out*". Good collaborative and co-operative relationships are very evident between all staff and governors. This enables the school to make good progress in developing and improving all aspects. The headteacher provides strong leadership. She is well able to identify developments that support the school's distinctiveness. Conflict and complaints are resolved quickly and effectively. Parents and pupils clearly express how their concerns are sensitively treated by teachers in a spirit of reconciliation. Displays,

many being interactive, encourage pupils to think and reflect. They offer good support to learning. Good plans are in place to further develop the outside spaces including improvements to the reflective-sensory garden.

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

Daily acts of worship effectively stimulate spiritual development. Worship plays a strong, central role in supporting the school's Christian character. Children identify how Christian values such as courage, forgiveness and thankfulness are important. Pupil's participation in worship is good. They say it is a happy occasion where ideas are shared and peace is felt. They behave respectfully and reverentially throughout. Staff and pupils are very actively involved. Parents and governors positively speak about the variety of opportunity the school provides for worship. They talk about the strong impact it has on children's compassion for others in the local and wider community. Worship supports cultural, moral and social development very well. One child shared that "*when something is bothering you, assembly helps you to solve the issues*". Prayer, silence and reflection are routinely included in worship to effectively support children's spiritual development. The singing is truly joyful. Worship is well planned and underpinned by a policy that focuses on Christian values. Governors, staff and pupils have contributed to some good evaluation of worship. This is in response to a development identified during the last inspection. Children, parents, staff and governors affirm ways in which the good links with the local Anglican church and clergy helps pupils' understanding of their Anglican heritage. Christian festivals are routinely celebrated in church. Good progress has been made in developing relationships with the local church and parish since the last inspection.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives and outcomes. Lessons observed in all key stages were good and well taught. Pupils are very well engaged. Lessons are well differentiated to more effectively meet the learners' needs. Pupils' thinking is well challenged. In all lessons there is a good emphasis on applying learning to the children's lives. Behaviour in lessons and attitudes to learning are good. Religious education makes a good contribution to social and moral understanding. Recent development to the religious education scheme of work supports the teaching well. Teachers use a range of assessment procedures, judging RE to be in line with and often better than other core subjects. It supports cultural development very well through good teaching about other religions including several visits to other places of worship. This contributes effectively to wider community understanding. Pupils' identify how understanding about Christianity is improved through RE lessons. They can talk openly about their beliefs and teachers take their views seriously. RE, including 'Godly Play', is well resourced.

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

The Christian vision of this school has been substantially strengthened by the current headteacher. All stakeholders confirm the importance of the clear ethos. Foundation governors maintain good and vigorous encouragement by supporting and promoting the vision. The clergy effectively encourage good spiritual and pastoral links between the church and school. Good self evaluation is in place. The headteacher, teachers and governors contribute well to evaluating and identifying developmental issues in the school as a church school. The relatively new religious education co-ordinator uses focussed monitoring activities to support further development of the subject and a foundation governor very ably assists her to lead and manage RE. Recent relevant training is being well applied in the school. Teachers are well supported and standards are challenged. Teachers, governors and the headteacher access professional training routinely which improves their knowledge of how to develop the school as a church school. Parents talk about how the school assists their children in becoming more independent individuals with a strong sense of Christian values. They positively identify that the provision of weekly information strengthens their understanding of what it means to be a church school. Parents, along with the pupils, make a good contribution to school development through conversations and questionnaires.