

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St. Margaret's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

School Road
Orford
Warrington
WA2 9AD

Diocese:	Liverpool
Local authority:	Warrington
Date of inspection:	6 th October 2011
Date of last inspection:	January 2009
School's unique reference number:	131349
Headteacher:	Mr C Metcalfe
Inspector's name and number:	Graham H Nuttall 456

School context

St. Margaret's is a much larger than average primary school based on a split site and currently undergoing a substantial building project. Most families are from white British backgrounds with the proportion of children eligible for free school meals higher than the national average. The number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also higher than average. The school has achieved Healthy School status and gained a national music award.

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

This is a good school with areas of outstanding practice. The headteacher, senior leaders and foundation governors promote a distinctive Christian vision for the school with enthusiasm and understanding. Links with the local church are exceptionally strong and enhance the quality of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Worship is central to the life of the school and underpins its Christian ethos. Parents are highly supportive of the school.

Established strengths

- The leadership of the headteacher, senior managers and governors in promoting a clear Christian vision for the school
- The school's strong links with the church and the caring, welcoming Christian ethos
- The excellent care, guidance and support for all children and their families
- The high standards of provision and outcome for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Focus for development

- Develop the role of the governing body in monitoring the effectiveness and impact of religious education teaching
- Develop assessment procedures to secure standards in religious education

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

The high levels of self-esteem, maturity and independence evident in children is testament to the dedication of all staff. They are succeeding in the development of confident and caring individuals. The mission statement, "Care, Challenge and Celebrate with Christ" highlights the Christian values and attitudes which are exemplified in the daily life of the school. This is demonstrated by the tremendous support, care and guidance given to all families, for example through the intervention of family support workers, and the exceptionally good use of external welfare, medical and support agencies. Parents know that the school is a safe place where

their feelings and emotions are handled in an atmosphere of tact and confidentiality. This impacts positively on children's well-being, behaviour and concentration. Parents speak highly of the school. "St. Margaret's is a welcoming place, where children are taught kindness and care within a Christian setting". Children are keen to help one another and applaud the efforts of others. Their understanding of the importance of helping those less fortunate than themselves is shown in their support for a broad range of local and national charities. The school supports a project in Romania and is developing support for a Muslim school in South Africa. These activities deepen children's understanding of the developing world. Classrooms and communal areas are bright stimulating places where Christian displays promote spiritual development. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are strong because of the positive impact made by the provision of a wide range of extra curricular activities.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is a central part of the daily life of the school. It is approached with reverence and calm. Planning is thorough and reflects Christian values, major festivals and seasons. It supports children's understanding of the qualities needed to lead a Christian life. Worship helps children to focus on attitudes, behaviour and the strengths and attributes required to tackle the problems of daily life. Typical comments from children included, "In worship we can be peaceful and quiet" and "This is a church school and talking to God is important to us". Collective worship has an outstanding effect on pupils' spiritual and moral development because of its richness, relevance and variety. Children participate fully in all aspects of worship and particularly so in their joyful and enthusiastic singing of Christian songs and hymns. Periods of reflection are built into worship with children making appropriate responses in their prayers. The vicar is pivotal in his ecclesiastical role. Children are invited to prepare for confirmation and 26 of them together with 3 members of staff were confirmed last year. The weekly Eucharist celebration held in school allows all members of the school community to experience Anglican faith and practice. As a result, children of all ages develop a very good awareness of this highly important aspect of the Anglican tradition. Key Christian festivals are celebrated in church and give opportunities for children to join with parents and members of the church community in order to lead and assist with the worship. Achievements are also celebrated within school assemblies and this helps to promote children's self-esteem. Records are kept of themes covered in worship and effective monitoring and evaluation with all partners helps to ensure that worship is of a high quality.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious education (RE) is viewed as an area of equal importance in the curriculum as other core areas. Standards of teaching and learning are good. Teachers use effective questioning techniques and open-ended discussions making high demands on children and developing independent thinking, particularly within Key Stage 2. Well-planned lessons ensure that children make good progress. Teachers make lessons interesting through the effective use of drama, information technology and the internet. Children are keen to offer their opinions, yet they also listen with increasing maturity to the views of others. Year 5 pupils were able to discuss with confidence the merits of following the Christian way of life when faced with the problems and challenges of alternative lifestyles. Year 2 pupils were absorbed with their drama presentations of Biblical stories and were able to recognise the difference between stories of the old and new testaments. Both observed lessons ended with periods of quiet reflection or prayer, with children being encouraged to think quietly and respectfully about what they had learned. Children at St. Margaret's have a good knowledge of Christianity. An inspection of written work indicated that they have a basic understanding of other world faiths. The school demonstrates a strong commitment to inclusion, with children recognising the need for respect and tolerance towards each other and other faith communities. The RE co-ordinators are enthusiastic and carry out their roles exceptionally well. However, the formal strategies to monitor and evaluate the impact of RE are not yet making an impact. This aspect has been identified as an area for development within the School Improvement Plan for 2011/12.

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

The dynamic and innovative senior leadership team has worked hard with governors and subject co-ordinators to address the areas of development identified by the last inspection. As a result, the school now has a clear vision and commitment to children's overall development and the school's Christian foundation. Staff and governors are now in a very strong position to enrich the school even further. Governors, together with the headteacher and senior leadership team are aware of the many challenging issues facing the school and they work exceptionally hard to sustain school improvement, support families and to raise levels of self-esteem amongst children. Parents are encouraged to be partners in their children's education and the family learning workshops in mathematics and promoting the positive behaviour of children are good examples of how they are supported. The worship and RE co-ordinators have attended relevant in-service training, which alongside delegation of responsibilities and empowerment, helps to encourage potential church school leaders. Through careful planning and accurate self-evaluation the school now has a clear understanding of its future needs as a church school. Governors talk openly about the school's strengths and areas of difficulty. They are supportive, yet challenging, and are proud of their recent achievements. There are excellent partnerships with local community support groups and these are seen as central to enhancing the positive relationships between school, parents and the local community.

SIAS report October 2011 St. Margaret's CE Primary School, Orford, Warrington WA2 9AD