



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### St Andrew's Church of England (VA) Infant School

Lightcliffe Road

Brighouse

West Yorkshire

HD6 2HH

#### Diocese: Wakefield

Local authority: Calderdale

Dates of inspection: 31 October 2006

Date of last inspection: 7 and 11 February 2003

School's unique reference number: 107548

Headteacher: Mrs Jill Embleton

Inspector's name and number: Mr Jeffery Plumb 248

#### School context

Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small group is from minority ethnic heritages; very few are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who find learning difficult is below average, but it can fluctuate annually, for example in 2006 it was above average. There has been a sizeable turnover in staff in the last two years and a new deputy head teacher was appointed in that time.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Andrews Infants as a Church of England school are good

An excellent partnership between the school and the parish church ensures its distinctiveness as a church school. There is an important focus on Christian worship. The school successfully includes pupils from Christian families alongside those from families of other faiths. This demonstrates Christian love. Although leadership of religious education has not been sufficiently robust in recent years, the future bodes well under the strategic direction of a new co-ordinator.

#### Established strengths

- The quality of care and support based on Christian love and forgiveness is outstanding.
- The partnership between the school and the parish church is outstanding.
- The planning for collective worship is outstanding.

#### Focus for development

- Conduct an evaluation of the provision for religious education and use the findings from this action to inform a development plan to raise the profile and quality of the subject.
- Implement an assessment system to track pupils' progress in religious education as they move through the school.
- Develop further the involvement of the pupils in the evaluation of collective worship.

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

Parents are delighted with the way in which the school meets the needs of their children. They say, 'It enables our children to become rounded young people, because they are fully included in every aspect of school life'. They consider that the Christian character of the school is reflected in the way in which their children are respected and made to feel special. Pupils enjoy all aspects of school life; particularly the after school clubs. A rich and innovative curriculum promotes enjoyment in learning. It makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Events such as Polish folk dancing and African drumming add very well to raising pupils' awareness of cultural diversity. Because of effective targeted support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make rapid gains in confidence and self esteem, and achieve well as a consequence. A culture of support, Christian love and forgiveness pervades the school. Pupils recognise that they can make mistakes, learn from them, and move on to become better young people as a result. Behaviour is good; there is a strong emphasis on forgiveness and moving on without holding grudges. Relationships are excellent. Treated with dignity and respect pupils are keen to take on responsibility for looking after each other. The head teacher and governors have created a culture which provides space for those pupils from Christian families to be nurtured in their faith, whilst ensuring those from non Christian families are respected for their beliefs. The magical ingredient in this successful school is that parents say, *'We would recommend this school to our friends without reservation because of its open door policy and because our children get the best of everything'*.

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

Collective worship lies at the heart of this successful church school. It makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Statutory requirements are met. An effective link with the local parish church and regular involvement by the rector in school worship raises pupils' awareness of aspects of Anglicanism. Pupils enjoy taking the lead in Eucharist services, both in school and the church. During the inspection the rector led a good act of worship. He used an apple as a visual cue to get across the message that God's love is like a little seed that grows inside us. Pupils appreciate acts of worship led by the rector. They say, 'We love it when Father shares the bread'. Planning for worship is outstanding and themes focus on the church liturgical calendar. The head teacher regularly evaluates the acts of worship. She has recently introduced a system to gather the views of pupils about what goes well and what does not go so well during the acts of worship. This is innovative practice, but it is at too early a stage of bedding down to evaluate its impact on improvement Pupils say, 'Acts of worship make us think about God'. Their faith is nurtured and they are given space to grow spiritually. They enjoy the acts of worship, particularly when they are involved in role play activity. They are moved spiritually by the words of the songs they sing with great gusto. They say, 'We like writing prayers for the Friday Family Service'.

**The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory.**

Teaching seen was at least good. One lesson was outstanding. In these well planned lessons pupils made good progress. Activities based on role play and the use of puppets engaged pupils' interest and promoted their learning exceptionally well. The school does not hold an overall judgement on the quality of teaching and learning in this subject. There is a system for monitoring the quality of teaching but it does not focus sharply on the connection between teaching and learning. The school knows that about 60% of pupils by Year 2 reach standards expected for pupils of that age following programmes of study based on the Wakefield Diocesan Syllabus. It cannot provide a secure progress judgement for these pupils because it does not consistently track their progress over a three year period. Planning to ensure a balanced coverage of Christianity, Judaism and Islam is good. Resources are good; a significant improvement since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy the subject and it makes a valuable contribution to their spiritual development. The school has not evaluated the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and there is not a development plan for improvement. There is not a priority on the school improvement plan to raise the profile of the subject. The new subject co-ordinator is sharp in her strategic thinking. The inspection was too early in respect of her role (only in this role for six weeks), but her understanding of what needs to be done to notch this subject up a gear bodes well for the future. Capacity for improvement is good.

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

The head teacher has a clear vision of what it means for St Andrew's to be an effective church school. In this school it is natural to talk about God and pupils are made aware of the importance of Jesus. Christianity is lived out in the day to day life. Outstanding links with the parish church make a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual development. The rector is regarded as a friend by the pupils and their parents. He visits the school regularly and supports the teaching of religious education as well as leading acts of worship. There is a clear priority on the school improvement plan to ensure strong ties with the church are sustained. The development of a system to involve pupils in the evaluation of worship is exciting, but it is too early to evaluate its effectiveness. Although there is not an action plan to lift the profile of religious education, the new subject co-ordinator is clear in her thinking of what needs to be done to raise achievement. The foundation governors are effective critical friends. They strike an excellent balance between providing support and challenge to the head teacher about what it means to be a church school.

SIAS report: Oct 2006 St Andrew's Infant School, Brighouse. HD6 2HH