



Inspection under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Name and address of school: St Saviour's Church of England (VA) Junior School, Upper Batley Lane, Batley, West Yorkshire, WF17 0NP
Type of school: Junior
Status: VA
Diocese: Wakefield
LEA: Kirklees
Dates of inspection: 18 July 2006
Date of last inspection: 25 – 27 September 2000
School's Unique reference number: 107738
Name of Acting Head Teacher: Miss F J Barker
Inspector's name with National Society inspector's number: Mr Jeffery Plumb 248

School context

This is an average size Church of England (VA) school which serves a mixed suburban area to the north of Batley. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, but an increasing minority come from other ethnic backgrounds. None are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. An acting head teacher is in post.

Summary Judgement

This is a good and rapidly improving church school because its self-evaluation of what it needs to do to improve its distinctiveness as a Christian school is robust. An excellent partnership has been developed between the acting head teacher and the vicar from the local parish church. They share a clear vision of what it means to be a church school and have robust action plans in place to make that vision a reality. There is a commitment to nurturing pupils in their faith; respecting those from non church going families; and giving all the space to grow spiritually. Wisely some plans have not been launched too robustly whilst waiting for a new head teacher to take up post in September 2006. But the school is poised to drive forward as a distinctive church school.

Established strengths

- Standards in religious education (RE) are above average by Year 6.
- The quality of care and support based on Christian love and forgiveness is outstanding.
- Links with the local parish church are effective; the vicar is a true friend to the pupils and their parents.

Self-evaluation about what it means to be a distinctive church school is outstanding.

Focus for development

- As identified by the school refine the assessment system for RE, ensuring that it dovetails the whole school approach for tracking pupil progress and fits the requirements of the Diocesan Syllabus.
- Develop and implement a system to gather the views of pupils about collective worship and use information gleaned from this evaluation to inform planning to raise achievement.
- Increase the involvement of the foundation governors in the planning of worship and raise the profile of the Anglican tradition / practice in school worship

How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?

St Saviour's C of E (VA) Junior School is good in meeting the needs of all pupils. Pupils say: *'We are treated with dignity'*. Parents and carers are delighted with the way in which their children are included in all aspects of school life. They say: *'The Christian character of the school is reflected in the respect and value shown to our children'*. Pupils are interested in their lessons and enjoy all aspects of school life; particularly the after school clubs. A rich curriculum provides opportunities for all pupils to succeed and makes a valuable contribution to their spiritual development. Achievement is good throughout the school and standards by Year 6 are above average. Because of targeted support, based on Christian love, pupils with learning difficulties make rapid gains in confidence and self-esteem, and take off with their reading. The most vulnerable children are a priority on the admissions criteria, and their needs are met exceptionally well. The acting head teacher has a clear Christian vision which is shared by all staff and creates an environment of challenge and support for all pupils. Behaviour is good; there is a strong focus on forgiveness and moving on. Relationships are excellent; based on a philosophy of Christian love, *all pupils* are encouraged to learn from their mistakes and succeed. Treated with dignity pupils take on responsibility with enthusiasm. There is a vibrant school council and older pupils act as effective *'play leaders'* in the infant school (it is on the same site). All pupils are given space to grow spiritually, but the school is not so successful in raising their awareness of cultural diversity. A magical ingredient is that pupils and parents say: *'We would recommend this school to our friends without reservation'*.

What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?

Collective worship has a good effect on the school community.

Collective worship is important in the life of the school and makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual development. The vicar from the local parish church makes a valuable contribution to worship. During the inspection he led an exceptionally good act of worship which encouraged pupils to reflect on *'moving on in life'*; particularly apt in the context of Year 6 pupils preparing for secondary school. Pupils reflected deeply when the vicar said: *'God is with us as we move through life, and He is greater than our problems'*. Planning for worship is good and themes are built around the church calendar. However, foundation governors are not sufficiently involved in the planning of the themes for the year. Aspects of *Anglicanism* are planned, but this could be sharper. Pupils say that the acts of worship impact positively on their lives and make them think deeply 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 such enthusiasm. Acts of worship for them are joyful occasions. Worship features as a priority for development on the school's

development plan. Through its own robust self-evaluation the school has identified the need to sharpen its system to gather the views pupils have about collective worship. Statutory requirements are met.

How effective is the religious education?

The effectiveness of religious education (RE) is good.

Achievement and standards are good. By Year 6 pupils reach standards above those expected for pupils of that age following programmes of study based on the Wakefield Diocesan Syllabus. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Planning is good. There is an excellent and balanced coverage of three world faiths. Christianity is the core provision, but coverage of Judaism and Islam is good. Recently a new assessment system has been trialled and is about to be reviewed. The subject leadership is excellent. Through effective self-evaluation the subject leader has identified the need to improve assessment so as to more robustly track pupils' progress as they move through the school. The model for monitoring teaching and learning is outstanding. It has impacted positively on improving the provision for RE. Because of a sensitive and thoroughly professional approach the subject leader has enabled teachers to become more confident in their teaching of the subject.

How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a Church School?

Leadership and management of the school as a church school are good.

The acting head teacher has a clear vision of what it means for St Saviour's to be a church school. Through partnership with the foundation governors a very effective link has been established with the parish church; this contributes to the distinctiveness of the school as a church school. The church community makes a valuable contribution to the school's life; including the running of an after school club which is greatly enjoyed by the pupil. The vicar is the friend of the children and their parents. He is regularly seen around school, where he is welcomed as a valuable teaching and pastoral resource. There are clear priorities on the school development plan to improve the quality of provision for collective worship and RE. The strategic planning to improve the provision for RE has begun to bite and has raised achievement. The robust plan to improve worship is at an early stage of implementation; the inspection took place too early to evaluate its impact. However, it is clearly evident that the capacity for further improvement of developing this school as a distinctive church school is good. The foundation governors are effective critical friends. They strike a good balance between support and challenge for the senior management team about what it means to be a church school.