

St Philip's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Hampton Road,
Southport,
Merseyside,
PR8 6SS

Diocese: Liverpool

Local authority: Sefton

Dates of inspection: 21st April 2009

Date of last inspection: 4th/5th October 2006

School's unique reference number - 104902

Headteacher: Mr Brian Johnson

Inspector's name and number: Miss Heather Starkie – 179

School context

St Philip's is an average size primary school. Pupils are predominantly of white British ethnicity. However, there are a small and increasing number of pupils joining the school of East European origin who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. The percentage of children eligible for free school meals is below average.

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

"Christ in everything we do" (mission statement) is at the heart of school life. Christian values underpin the work of the school and the strong Christian ethos has a significant impact on children's learning as well as their personal development. The close working partnership between the school and the church adds a valuable dimension to the Christian character of the school.

Established strengths

- The caring and supportive family atmosphere in which all pupils are nurtured and valued.
- The way in which the mission statement underpins the work of the school.
- The clear vision of the headteacher and his commitment to embedding the Christian values within the daily life of the school.
- The strong and effective links between the school, the church and the local parish community.

Focus for development

- To provide experiences for the children to understand and appreciate the multi-cultural nature of today's society in Britain as well as world wide diversity.
- To develop the use of assessment in religious education (RE) to monitor children's progress and attainment.
- To consider ways in which children can become more involved in the planning, leading and evaluation of worship.

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

School is a place where *"Happiness, security and love abound"*. Children enjoy school, have positive attitudes to their learning and are keen to succeed. Year 6 children "nurture" foundation stage pupils through the "buddy" programme. This promotes a warm, caring, family atmosphere in which younger children are happy and feel safe. *"Relationships and team work matter"*. Christian values are evident in all relationships within school. Older children are encouraged to undertake a range of roles within school including play leaders and peer mediators. This allows them to experience a sense of responsibility and fosters positive relationships between all children. Christian values are promoted extremely well through SEAL (Social, Emotional Aspects of Learning) activities further enhancing the Christian character of the school and supporting the personal development and well being of the children within a structured and supportive Christian context. *"Everyone is special"* and

"Every achievement is celebrated". Children feel their work and achievements are valued by staff. Weekly "Star of the Week" certificates are awarded which enhances their confidence and has a positive impact on self esteem. Children's spiritual development is promoted extremely well. The school has recently developed its grounds to create effective outdoor learning spaces. This is an ongoing project, but already there are opportunities by which children are developing a sense of awe and wonder of God's creation. The children organise a range of fundraising activities on a regular basis in support of local, national and worldwide charities. This allows them to appreciate the needs of others who are less fortunate than themselves. Some opportunities are provided, particularly through art and music, to help children to respect and value the diversity of cultures across the world. Experiences for them to understand and appreciate cultural diversity more locally and recognise Britain as a multi cultural society, are not sufficiently well developed or established.

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

Collective Worship has a significant impact in promoting the Christian character of the school and in developing children's knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. Worship is an important feature of school life and is respected and valued by the children and all members of the school family and community. Planning follows clear Christian themes. Good use is made of stories from both the Bible and moral themes are incorporated well to promote Christian values effectively. Children are encouraged to reflect on ways in which the teachings of Jesus impact on their own lives and on the lives of others. This has a positive impact on allowing children to develop love, care and respect towards others. Children join in well through reading, leading prayers, singing and being involved in drama and role play. These opportunities help children to engage with the worship more fully and for it to become more meaningful for them. Opportunity should also be given for them to be involved in the planning, leading and evaluation of worship. The vicar and/or Methodist minister lead worship in school on a regular basis. The worship link governor, who is very active within the church, provides extremely effective support and ensures the school and church plan worship together. Leaders and representatives from other local Christian denominations are also invited to lead worship on occasions. Such involvement widens children's knowledge and understanding of the broad nature of Christianity as well as fostering and supporting the strong ecumenical links within the local parish community.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

RE has a positive impact on developing children's knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. RE is taught effectively. Challenging activities are provided. There is an effective balance between "learning about religion" and "learning from religion". Open ended questioning enables children to reflect on their learning successfully. They are effectively encouraged to think about, and to discuss ways in which their learning about the Christian faith has implications and significance for their own lives as well as the lives of other Christian people. Progress in RE across each of the key stages and standards of attainment are good. Areas for development raised at the last SIAS inspection have been partly addressed successfully. Marking of children's work has become more focused and encourages children to reflect on their work. Strategies for assessing children's learning in RE have been implemented but are not fully embedded or used consistently across the school. Neither are children involved in self assessment of RE learning. Judaism and Islam are effectively integrated into the curriculum plan for RE. Successful visits to a synagogue and a mosque enabled children to experience, at first hand, the beliefs of Jews and Muslims and extend their understanding of multi faith issues.

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

The headteacher provides very good leadership and has a clear vision for the school which is based on the Christian gospel. Both the headteacher and the deputy headteacher provide excellent role models in ensuring that their own personal commitment to the Christian faith impacts on the Christian vision and work of the school. Staff are extremely hard working and are very committed. This allows children to flourish and develop as individuals in their own interests, skills and talents within a supportive learning environment. Governors are extremely supportive of the school and, working alongside the headteacher and his deputy, have a strong commitment to promoting a self evaluating school, setting challenging targets

allowing the school to build on its many strengths and successes. The school is “*A beacon of light in the community*”. The diocesan church/school partnership award has recently been achieved reflecting the effective mutual respect and support between the school and the church. The recent “Live Life, Love Lent” project focused on the positive things the school family and the church family could do during Lent to ensure God’s beautiful world is respected and sustained. Parents are supportive of the joint working and strong school/church links. This is reflected in their support of and attendance at joint school/church events. They also appreciate the care and support provided by the school and the encouragement children receive in their learning. The leadership team regularly seeks the views of parents on the work of the school. Parents have been involved in reviewing the vision and values statement. A Parent Support Adviser (PSA) has recently been appointed to encourage parents to become more involved in their children’s education. There is an established and effective school council which enables the leadership team to gather children’s views. Representatives on the school council have recently been involved in discussions with regard to the spending of £10,000 to further enhance the school grounds. Children feel their suggestions are valued and contribute significantly to the decision making processes within school.

SIAS report April 2009 St Philip’s Church of England Primary School, Southport PR8 6SS