



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Philip's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Westbrook Centre

Westbrook

Warrington

WA5 8UE

Diocese: Liverpool

Local authority: Warrington

Dates of inspection: 14th March 2014

Date of last inspection: December 2008

School's unique reference number: 111385

Headteacher: Philip Carswell

Inspector's name and number: Ruth Wall (548)

School context

St Philip Westbrook is a larger than average primary school. Its 413 children come from owner occupied housing in a new town district of Warrington. The number of children with learning difficulties and / or disabilities and those entitled to free school meals is well below the national average. The school houses community facilities and the Anglican/ Methodist Church. The school has achieved the Church and School Partnership award.

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

- A clear Christian vision is at the heart of all that St Philip's does. The conviction with which this vision is promoted by the headteacher and shared by all members of the school community, ensures the school's success in meeting the academic and spiritual needs of all children.
- The outstanding behaviour of the children which reflects the Christian ethos of the school.
- Relationships with the St Philip's Ecumenical Church are very strong in promoting a shared Christian vision for development and learning.

Areas to improve

- To develop the RE coordinator role in leading initiatives which will further improve teaching and learning.
- For staff and governors to be involved in the process of more formal evaluation of worship which will inform school development planning.

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

The school's logo 'Together we aim high and with God's love we can fly' is evident all round the school and on documents and communication. This, together with its core Christian values, shapes the thinking of the school and is understood, articulated and embraced by all members of the school community. 'The introduction of our Christian values has strengthened the faith and shared vision of our school family', is how one teacher expresses their importance. Children speak with clarity and conviction about the Christian values that are important for their lives. Through their work in the ethos group, children say, 'We can make a true Christian ethos happen.' A practical example of this is their development of the spiritual garden which provides opportunities for quiet reflection which positively impacts of children's spiritual development. Behaviour is outstanding and the school attributes this to the focus on Christian values which underpin their behaviour management system. The headteacher explains, 'We seek to change behaviour rather than manage it, which we believe is part of our Christian mission.' Parents agree that the children's understanding of Christian values has influenced their attitudes to others at home. Children enjoy school and attendance is above average. The Christian character of the school is clearly defined and effectively promoted so as to make a significant impact on the personal development and academic achievements of the children. These strengths within the school's Christian character have been the foundation for its academic success. It is also at the heart of all relationships. Children's spiritual and cultural development is enhanced by a wide range of cultural activities including their strong link with the Masizani Primary School in South Africa who share the Christian ethos. The school is both distinctive in its Christian character and inclusive in its approach to diversity. This is a highly cohesive community in which all feel valued regardless of differences.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Children recognise that distinctively Christian worship is at the heart of the school and understand the place of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit within the Christian faith. Worship covers Christian themes with a strong emphasis on Christian values and on important Christian festivals. This enables children to have a very good understanding of the nature of worship, the Christian faith and ecumenical Anglican and Methodist traditions and practice. All staff attend worship. A teacher says 'Being part of a church school and attending worship, enables me to have my own time for reflection.' The school appreciates the benefit of being in a position to open up the school hall to the church area. This enables them to worship with the community and church members in the Wednesday service, the termly Eucharist, and special Sunday family services. Worship is very well planned by the headteacher, members of the church team and the ethos group, which includes elected children. The ethos group express great enthusiasm for the important contribution they make to planning and leading worship and agree that it has 'developed our confidence.' Children say they enjoy being able to participate in worship through drama, music, reading and prayers. Members of the school community speak fondly of the specific projects linked to Harvest, Christmas and Easter which they say are 'particularly successful.' Those who attended one service speak of the 'spiritual strength' of the service and singing that demonstrated 'children's joy.' Music is a strength of the school and used effectively to enhance worship. In the worship observed the Year 6 gospel choir sang beautifully and rhythmically. The school appreciates the input in leading worship of the church team, who are also governors of the school. The prominent place of prayer across the school ensures that worship is a spiritual experience of real significance. Children are involved in the evaluation of worship through discussions and surveys. They say that they particularly enjoy stories in worship and the headteacher has responded to this by using a 'special story-teller's chair'. Leaders recognise the need to involve staff and governors more in the process of evaluation to fully inform school development planning.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The school's monitoring and evaluation shows that the quality of teaching is good overall with outstanding teaching increasing. This enables children to have a sound understanding of the Christian faith and of other faiths represented within the wider community. Standards are in line with those attained in other core subjects which are good in relation to national expectations. The school has a strong commitment to developing all aspects of teaching and learning in RE using the diocesan syllabus and on-going evaluation leads to adapting this to reflect the outlook of the school. RE is valued throughout the school and children take pride in their 'special book' to record their written work in. Evidence shows that progress is good and this is achieved through the use of a range of teaching methods and resources which engage children's imagination and intellect. Children say that they particularly enjoy role play and art in RE as it 'makes learning more fun.' In the Key Stage 1 lesson observed, children watched an animated video clip of Jesus healing a paralysed man. They showed how they were learning from this story in responding to questions about the feelings of others. Children in Key Stage 2 demonstrated their developing reflective skills in an interactive, philosophical discussion on how the biblical story of Daniel reveals the nature of God. Children were beginning to respond to the challenge of thinking and evaluating their ideas. The school provides excellent opportunities to learn about various faiths through RE and cross-curricular themes and visits. This contributes well to children's cultural development. The issues raised at the previous inspection have been addressed as a result of focused school development. Marking now gives children a clear indication of how their work can be improved and they respond effectively in the time given to do this. A sound programme of assessment activities and recording is now used to track children's progress and determine next steps in learning. Senior leaders have undertaken lesson observations, which ensure that teaching and learning is monitored and evaluated and leads to on-going school improvement. The new RE coordinator has undertaken diocesan training and it is acknowledged that her role now needs to develop to fully involve her in leading the subject.

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

The headteacher and governors are highly effective in articulating the Christian ethos and in promoting and establishing that ethos throughout the school and beyond to the community. A governor emphasised the importance they all place on, 'growing together, praying together, working together', and the headteacher confirmed that all meetings in school begin with prayer. Through thorough self-evaluation the school knows itself well. Leaders and governors take time to listen to the views of the staff, children and parents and to make an appropriate response. They are aware of the school's strengths and areas for development of the school as a church school and have identified priorities for school action. All issues raised at the previous inspection have been fully addressed. A foundation governor coordinated the process of attaining the Church and School Partnership Award. Leaders and governors have been successful in ensuring that the academic needs of the children are met. In doing so they have recognised the importance of the school's Christian character in creating an ethos which supports effective learning. Collective worship and RE are led with commitment and a genuine desire to continue to seek ways to improve further. Provision is made for staff to attend training and the deputy headteacher is currently taking part in Christian leadership training. The school has strong and supportive links with the team from St Philip's Church. As members of the governing body and the ethos group they are fully involved with the development of the school. Their varied work with children, including preparing them for confirmation, is a much valued part of school life. Children have a full and active role in decision making through the school council, ethos and global awareness groups. One child explains that their presentation for the Education Sunday service in church, on the school's link with Masizani School, will 'give the community a chance to get involved.'

