

**St. John with St Augustine Church of England Primary School**

Maudsley Street  
Accrington  
Lancashire  
BB5 6AD

Diocese: Blackburn

Local authority: Lancashire

Dates of inspection: 17/3/08

Date of last inspection: 18/10/04

School's unique reference number: 119445

Headteacher: Mr GW Garlick

Inspector's name and number: Mr G Yates NS230

**School context**

The school is situated in the urban town of Accrington and is an average sized primary school. Most pupils live nearby. There are very few pupils at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils who receive free school meals is above average as is the number of pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils start school with skills below those typical for their age. The local church is next to the school but is currently closed. The two school buildings have undergone extensive refurbishment since the previous inspection. At the time of the inspection the vicar was on sickness leave. The school has achieved many awards and its links extend into Europe and beyond.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St John with St Augustine school as a Church school are good**

The school successfully meets what it sets out to do in providing a good education in a Christian context. All aspects of school life are valued highly by the pupils and the school's Christian ethos is very strong. As a result, by the time pupils leave, they are well prepared socially for the next stage in their education.

**Established strengths**

- Acts of worship are of a good quality
- Pupils have very sensible attitudes, are very friendly, behave exceptionally well and have a willingness to help each other
- The school is led and managed well

**Focus for development**

- To establish systems to evaluate the quality and standards in worship and religious education
- To ensure that when older pupils are asked to use their writing skills in religious education lessons the quality of their work reflects their capabilities

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

This is a happy school where pupils flourish in a highly caring Christian environment. The school's 'Golden Rules' are the cornerstone of school life. As a result pupils really do carry out what is expected of them. 'Don't forget to treat everyone fairly,' very apparent in pupils and adults actions around the school, is one of the school's key rules. All children are treated equally, regardless of gender, ability or background and their achievements are regularly celebrated. A good example of this is the awards for each class much appreciated by all pupils. The high quality creative work done as part of the 'What a waste' environmental

project is a clear sign that pupils experience a broad and well planned curriculum that also develops their awareness of environmental issues. Pupils say how happy and safe they feel within the school buildings, despite the on-going building work. They talk of the kindness and concern of the staff towards them and know that they can raise issues that worry them. One child commented, 'If you need help you get it from a peer mediator!' The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils is of a high quality. There are many opportunities given to broaden pupils' experience, including residential visits and sporting events. Through their very good behaviour and attitudes the children show good understanding of the place of Christian values in school. For example, care and concern for others extends beyond the school environment to others as is seen in the regular support given to charities.

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

Christian worship is integral to all aspects of the life of the school. The school hall provides an outstanding environment where worship can take place. One child commented that going into the hall 'made him imagine what heaven was like.' Worship is well planned and much looked forward to by the pupils. Christian festivals are celebrated and when the church was open, services took place there. Pupils say how much they enjoyed going into church and say they look forward to the church opening again. Collective worship has a distinctly Christian focus and includes prayers and songs. Pupils of all ages take an active part and it is very apparent they enjoy what they do. Acts of Worship start in a peaceful manner, due to calming music and the very good behaviour of pupils. The high quality of pupils' singing of the Lord's Prayer was a major strength in the act of worship experienced during the inspection. Pupils were keen to listen and actively take part in all the prayers. Younger pupils were bursting with enthusiasm to talk about why they had palm crosses with them and what they represented as part of the celebration of Holy Week. In all classrooms the prayers on display demonstrate that worship is very much part of the school day not just assembly time. Discussions held with pupils showed that they understand that prayers are a way of speaking to God. Prayers are said reverently before lunch and at the end of the day. The prayer box in the hall allows pupils to share their thoughts with others and pupils are very aware of its significance. The environment of the school is further enhanced by a display of Christian symbols.

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

Pupils have a good knowledge of Christianity and their knowledge of other world religions is satisfactory. Through the school's very good links with a number of other countries such as Poland, pupils have a good cultural knowledge. The religious education scheme of work has been revised to reflect the new diocesan syllabus. However, it is too early to evaluate its success. Lessons are well planned and pupils find the religious education interesting and are keen to discuss and reflect on the subject. For example children in the Reception class are rightly proud of their knowledge of the events of Palm Sunday. There are no effective systems to evaluate pupils' successes in religious education. A range of teaching methods are used well, including drama and storytelling. However, when pupils are asked to use their writing skills there is an inconsistency in the range and quality of work produced. In one class some good work has been done by pupils in providing their written interpretation of why Jesus told parables but work done in some classes is pitched at too low a level and does not allow pupils to use their writing skills well.

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

This is a good school that is led well and is firmly grounded in Christian principles. It has the full support of its parents. While 'building work in progress' is still a major feature of school life the headteacher and governors have been highly successful in improving the school environment. As a result, classrooms and other areas provide [or are developing as] a stimulating environment where learning can take place. The headteacher ensures that the school's Christian ethos remains uppermost in all the school does. The fulfillment of the school's mission statement is the cornerstone of all aspects of school life – 'We value Christian beliefs and practices'. The headteacher leads by example, promoting good

behaviour in pupils and very good relationships with all those in the school community. This has created a positive working environment where success is acknowledged and concerns or difficulties are positively addressed. The pupils appreciate this and praise their teachers, 'teachers always help you out.' Foundation Governors are totally committed to ensuring the school is led and managed well. One of the governors contributes articles about the school to the church magazine. The school ensures that those pupils who want to be prepared for confirmation are given the chance and there is a good uptake. The vicar is currently on sickness leave but prior to this was a regular visitor to the school, well known by pupils and actively involved in leading worship. The school has not carried out a formal audit of provision and its impact on the children. The leadership of the school realises the value of developing evaluation procedures to ensure worship remains good and that standards in religious education can be improved. The leadership and management of the school should feel proud of their achievements and look forward to an even better future for their school.

SIAS report March 2008, St John's with St Augustine CE Primary School, BB5 6AD