

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

**Saint Joseph's Catholic and Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School  
Calver Crescent, Staveley, Chesterfield. S43 3LY**

**Diocese: Derby and Catholic Diocese of Hallam**

Local authority: Derbyshire

Dates of inspection: December 14<sup>th</sup> 2007

Date of last inspection: New Status in 2006

School's unique reference number: 134773

Headteacher: Jane Burke.

Chair of Governors: Sheila Godley

Inspector's name and number: Mr David Huw Williams : 348

### School context

Saint Joseph's is situated in the old mining and steel village of Staveley near to the town of Chesterfield. In 2006 there was a change in status and the school became a joint Roman Catholic and Church of England school. Many of the families in the area face challenging social and financial difficulties. The majority of the children are from White British heritage.

### Summary Judgement

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Saint Joseph's Catholic and Church of England Voluntary Aided as a Church of England school are good.**

Strong Christian principles underpin all aspects of school life. The creation of a safe and secure community ensures that the children mature both spiritually and academically. The caring attitudes of the staff characterize the way in which the school's Christian ethos is the foundation to its drive to be successful.

### Established strengths

The strong Christian ethos ensures that all pupils are highly valued.

The good relationship established between the school and both churches.

The good quality collective worship and religious education which impacts on the school's distinctiveness.

The support for the school and the confidence expressed in it by governors, parents and the wider community.

The children's good personal, social, moral and spiritual development is consistently supported throughout the school by all staff.

### Focus for development

Use the variety of settings and style so that pupils can be more personally involved in leading worship.

Create a dedicated area inside the classrooms and in the school grounds to actively support the prayer and reflective work within the school.

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

The headteacher, supported by staff and governors, has succeeded in establishing a positive climate. The school's ethos is underpinned by Christian values. Parents support this. One parent commented *'there is a loving, caring ethos in the school built on respect for each other'* and another parent commented that *'the school isn't just inward looking it looks outward to those people who are less fortunate.'* All feel welcome, safe and valued at this inclusive school. Younger pupils were appreciative of the support, care and attention they received from the older pupils. They were very positive about the role that the prefects play in this. Pupils and parents are confident in the structures for help and support within the school. Pupils' behaviour

is good, as they have a good understanding of what is right and wrong and acknowledge the importance of rules. The school council is a positive influence and ensures pupils are involved in decision making in school. There is wholehearted support for charities, both organised by the school and also those organised and run by the children. The staff's good use of the knowledge they have of the individual pupil enables them to provide the support and challenge they need for successful achievement. Children's achievements both academic and non academic are promptly recognised, rewarded and celebrated. The school's Christian distinctiveness is well supported by good displays and Christian symbols in the entrance hall, school hall and classrooms. The advent display boards and wreaths in each classroom and the advent calendar and wreath in the hall were good examples. The family nature of the school helps to encourage in the children a sense of identity and security. Relationships in the school and the wider community are good, reflecting the philosophy and values of the school. Governors and the parish priests provide good support. Staff are very good role models for the children.

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

Worship is a very important aspect in the everyday life of the school. Well planned collective worship is monitored and evaluated by the headteacher and governors. A good variety of themes, mainly based on the Sunday Bible reading, are delivered by a number of leaders and in a variety of settings such as class and key stage worship. Regular attendance by staff at whole school worship reinforces the family ethos of the school. The recognition of the significance of birthdays, both children and staff, by singing '*happy birthday*' is a further indication of the inclusive nature of the school. Pupils are aware of the distinctive nature of worship and enter and exit the hall in a quiet and respectful way. Children speak positively about worship and look forward to the daily act of worship. Children were able to recount a significant number of previous worship times they had enjoyed. They are attentive and respond well with thoughts and opinions. In the good worship observed the sense of '*being one together*' was enhanced by the positive seating of the children. All pupils sang tunefully and with great enthusiasm. One verse was sung beautifully by a child followed by a group of children delightfully singing the last verse. In the reflective time children were asked to focus on '*people in their own street and town*' before they finished with an appropriate prayer. Children are keen to talk about their faith. Children participate well in corporate prayers and pray at the start of school, before lunch and at the end of the day. Children have written prayers and liturgies which are used at appropriate times in both school worship and at the church. Corporate prayer is also supported by a prayer board in the hall. Outside the formal setting of collective worship, there is not enough opportunity for reflection. Worship at the different denominational churches on special occasions is well supported by the whole community wanting to share in the celebrations. Many worship celebrations held at the school are well attended by parents and the community. This was demonstrated by the superb response to '*carols and cake*' Christmas celebration. Relevant understanding of Catholic and Anglican liturgies is aided by prayers and symbols used in worship and in and through the RE curriculum.

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

Religious Education is acknowledged as an essential component of the whole school curriculum. The positive status the subject is given is in recognition of its importance to the well being of the pupils. The R.E. curriculum is based on the Catholic 'Here I am' programme and is augmented with a termly topic on 'Values for Living'. This is well supported by governors, staff and parents. Monitoring and evaluation is well developed by the RE co-ordinator. The termly staff meetings to which the parish priests and governors are invited supports the importance of RE. Teaching and learning was seen to be good. The whole school theme on 'visitors' was differentiated by task in both Key Stages. A good example of the use of interactive learning was seen in discussion between the children and teacher in the year 6 class in considering how Jesus may have greeted visitors and what he may have said to them. The challenging task set on the meeting between Jesus and three controversial historical characters was keenly discussed by the children. Consideration is given to the learning of different faiths. Key faiths are built into the curriculum and there are also specific themed days based around festivals such as Divali and Hanukah. Children work willingly and respond readily with enthusiasm and enjoyment to the tasks presented as observed in the lesson on 'the different ways of preparing for the arrival of Jesus' in Class 3. During the lesson there was a lively and informative group

discussion on the aspects of first preparing the home environment but more importantly how we prepared ourselves '*how do we make ourselves better.*' Children remarked '*be a peacemaker, be truthful*' and '*be a faithful friend*'. Relationships in all the classrooms were observed to be good. Pupils' attitudes are very positive and enthusiastic teaching stimulates their interest and pace of learning. Children's attainment throughout the school is good and standards are above average by the end of Key Stage 2.

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

The headteacher supported by staff, governors and the parish priests, share and promote a Christian vision for the school. The school's statement '*you will know we are Christians by our love,*' is amply demonstrated by the love, care and respect afforded to all. Good relationships between the governors and the school are beginning to have positive influence upon the educational provision for the children. The school now has a full compliment of foundation governors ensuring the school meets all its commitments. Adults in the school provide good role models. Both parish priests' commitment to the school is highly valued and both are regular and welcome visitors. There are good links with the both churches. Constructive progress has been made in the school's evaluation of its Christian distinctiveness and effectiveness as a Church school. The school is ensuring that children have good experiences of services at both Saint Joseph's and Saint Columba. The children are eager to share their views with others. Parents consulted during the inspection were highly supportive of the school. They were pleased with the progress made by their children, not only academically, but also with the level of individual care they receive. Parents were also pleased with the school's community involvement and the happiness and readiness of the children to attend school. The school generates positive attitudes, a clear vision and is working hard to ensure a successful future.

SIAS report [December 2007]

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