



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Diocese of St Albans



St Paul's C of E Primary School
The Common, Chipperfield, Kings Langley WD4 9BS

LA: Hertfordshire
SIAS Inspection: 4th June 2009
Previous SIAS Inspection: 12th July 2006
URN: 117441
Headteacher: Mrs Norah Tattersall
SIAS Inspector: Lindsay Fraser
Inspector Number: 107

School context

St Paul's is an average-sized village primary school that serves the village of Chipperfield and beyond. Most children are white British and the proportion with special educational needs is below average. Most pupils come from the immediate locality though an increasing number live further afield.

Summary Judgement

This is an outstanding church school in which Christian values impact upon the spiritual, cultural, social and moral development and achievements of the pupils. This results from the excellent leadership of the headteacher, the governors and the commitment of the whole staff.

Established strengths

- Leadership at all levels, including the outstanding vision and drive of the headteacher, the emphasis given to the Christian distinctiveness of the school by the governing body and the commitment of all staff.
- The spiritual development of the pupils
- The rigorous assessment procedures in Religious Education which are impacting upon standards

Focus for development

- To consider ways to further develop pupils' engagement in Collective Worship

The school is outstanding in meeting the needs of all learners through its distinctive Christian ethos.

High standards are achieved in this school because, as pupils report, 'teachers push you to your limit whilst remaining friendly and approachable'. Christian values have a high impact upon pupils' academic achievements and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Values are perceived by both pupils and parents as Christian values, but values which are also common to other faiths. An example of this was observed during 'Citizenship Week', when Year 4 pupils learned about stewardship of money from a Christian perspective with examples from other faiths. Topics within Citizenship Week also enabled pupils to develop other aspects of responsibility, especially through the use of the 'Fair Trading' game for Years 5 and 6 pupils. Teaching and learning are often outstanding, especially during these themed weeks which enable pupils to be highly motivated and engaged in their learning. The provision and opportunities given to pupils enable them to flourish as all round individuals because the staff ensure that they are meeting the needs of all pupils through personalised learning. This includes the one to one interviews for KS2 at the beginning of each term. Comments by parents, pupils and external professionals endorse this judgement. One comment in particular from a pupil sums up this judgement, 'It gets me ready for the rest of my life. I wouldn't ever get a better school'. Provision has improved since the previous inspection because the opinions of all stakeholders have clearly been listened to and responded to, from the consultation on the new school vision and motto to the questionnaires, surveys and circle time. Although the school sees the need to seek opportunities to extend the pupils' knowledge and respect for other cultures the school is already doing much to develop this through the links with Mexico, the visit of the Rwandan bishop and links with the Rwandan village through the church, Around the World Week and the links with Kenmore Park School in Wembley. Parents appreciate the school's commitment to ensure that pupils have an understanding of other cultures and the diverse society beyond the immediate environment in which the pupils live. Christian values appear to underpin all relationships throughout the school, including the well-being programme for staff. Members of staff are committed and supportive, displaying high morale. Spiritual development is excellent because of the opportunities provided through the classroom and whole school spiritual and reflective displays, the use of permanent display for reflection in the school hall and the use by the pupils of the reflections' box, the prayer tree, bubble time and 'feeling flowers' in the Foundation Stage.

The impact of Collective Worship on learners is outstanding.

The importance given to Collective Worship and its impact upon pupils has improved since the previous inspection and is now seen within the school, by pupils and their parents, as a valuable aspect of the pupils' development and central to the school as a church school. Pupils' attitudes are very positive with only a very small minority who do not enjoy Collective Worship. Comments from pupils show that they value this time for a variety of reasons and this is substantiated by parents, one important comment being 'Assemblies are often powerful, always positive and teach about God in a real and accessible manner'. Pupils obviously enjoy the growing opportunities to be involved in leading Collective Worship and the school has plans to further involve pupils in the planning. Some older pupils would like to have more opportunities to have content geared more towards their level of maturity. Worship appears to impact upon the spiritual development of pupils because the visiting clergy has noticed that 'the children now have a real sense and purpose of what worship is about'. The impact of Collective Worship has been made stronger because opportunities for prayer and reflection extend beyond the actual Act of Worship through the Prayer Tree and Reflections Box. The effective use of the Interactive Whiteboard enables a greater focus for the beginning of Worship. Regular use of the Church, especially for the major Christian Festivals, is a strong feature together with the strength of support for the school by the visiting clergy of different denominations. This reinforces the wider Christian message. The impact of Collective Worship may also have contributed to the greater number of families attending the local church. The Anglican heritage is made clear through the use of the liturgical colours on the assembly table and the responses at the beginning of Worship. There is a clear evaluation of planning for Collective Worship by the vicar and headteacher and there are further plans to explore the impact on pupils of prayer and reflection.

The impact of Religious Education on learners is outstanding.

The effectiveness of the provision for teaching and learning in Religious Education, as a result of the priority given to the subject within the school, ensures that the impact on pupils' progress is outstanding. The Governing Body regards the teaching of Religious Education as a priority and therefore supports a specialist Religious Education teacher. The overriding strengths of this area include the leadership of a subject leader who is clearly extremely knowledgeable in both the subject knowledge and the use of a diverse methodology. Planning ensures that pupils are learning from Religion as well as learning about Religion. Standards which are good, and very good in many cases, are set to improve further because of the rigorous approach to assessment, the use of personalised targets and opportunities given to support individual needs. Pupils know and understand the levels at which they are working and what they should do next to improve their learning. The school has clearly addressed the subject of spiritual development and the impact of Religious Education. Quite rightly the school has taken steps to address their concerns regarding a discrete lesson in Religious Education through the priority given to the subject in themed weeks, especially of Inspirations Week and Citizenship Week. The attitudes of pupils towards Religious Education, especially those of other faiths and of no faith, have become much more positive which suggest that the wide variety of teaching and learning styles is having an impact.

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

The leadership and management of the school as a church school have been extremely effective at all levels in moving this school forward and developing its distinctively Christian character. This is because the headteacher, governors and leaders have a very clear understanding of the distinctiveness of a church school and have a very clear vision for the future of their church school, promoting its distinctiveness through all available channels. All actions are aimed at embodying the school's Christian values. The vision has been formed and shared by all stakeholders and therefore all stakeholders are party to its implementation. Evaluation of the school as a church school is in place with self-evaluation undertaken by all stakeholders including pupils. There is an extremely strong partnership between the school and the local community which involves a large variety of projects such as charity work, exchange visits, carol singing for local senior citizens, the distributing of the parish newsletter through e-mail and visits from members of the local community. The partnership between the school and the local church is very strong. Many pupils have chosen to be involved in a variety of church activities. The vicar, Rev'd Jim, and the youth worker, lead Collective Worship twice weekly, once in the main school and once in the Foundation Stage and this is highly valued by all pupils. The youth worker is also actively involved in other areas of school life including two well attended lunchtime clubs aimed at enabling pupils to discover God. Year 3 pupils have also been involved in the writing of invitations, as part of the literacy curriculum, for the All Age Worship in the church and the making of refreshments for the service. Rev'd Jim has been a vital resource for answering difficult questions in Religious Education lessons through his science background. Staff ensure that parents are kept well informed about Collective Worship and Religious Education, an example of which was the information given to parents of Foundation Stage pupils regarding the sensitive content of learning about Easter. The school is taking many steps to develop leadership at all levels from the distributive leadership amongst the staff to leadership amongst pupils. This drives forward all aspects of school development.