



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

All Saints Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School
Hollybush Lane, Datchworth, Knebworth SG3 6RE

Diocese of St Albans

LA:	Hertfordshire
SIAS Inspection:	Thursday 4 June 2009
Previous S48 Inspection:	17 July 2006
URN:	117430
Headteacher:	Mary Willatt
SIAS Inspector Name:	Bob Hopcraft
SIAS Inspector No:	484

School Context

All Saints Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average school set in a delightful rural location. Excellent use is made of the outdoor environment. Over the years it has grown steadily to its present size, with 161 pupils on roll and it is popular with parents from the local community and beyond. Pupils are mostly of White British heritage and the proportion of pupils from other backgrounds is in line with the national average. The numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is slightly below the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of All Saints as a Church of England school are good.

This is because of the real impact of the school's Christian values on all who work and learn here. As a result, there is a strong sense of family and community within the school. Pupils' spiritual development is well provided for and is effectively supported by the high quality acts of worship. The very good relationships with the parish and the local community ensure that all feel cared for and valued.

Established strengths

- The leadership of the headteacher and her vision for the development of the school as a Church school;
- The high quality acts of worship and their positive impact on the school community;
- The challenging and interesting RE lessons;
- The outstanding relationships and the strong family feel which these give to the school.

Focus for development

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to be involved in writing and using their own prayers;
- Ensure that the work in RE books matches the high levels of understanding that pupils demonstrate in discussion;
- Ensure that areas for development identified in the school's self evaluation are included in the school development plan, so as to provide a strategic view of the school's future development as a Church school.

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

This is because Christian values are implicit in all that the school stands for and holds to be important; therefore, they play a key part in the everyday lives of those who work and learn here. All those involved with the school are clear about the profound impact that these values have on pupils, encouraging and nurturing them to grow as articulate, confident young people. This supports the genuine family feel within the school, which ensures that relationships are outstanding at all levels. As one parent put it *"there is a strong sense of community and respect amongst all"*. The strong sense of continuity and community was summed up by the comment of one governor, who said: *"I feel that the sense of religious, historical and social continuity adds something extra to everyone involved in the school"*. As a result, the school provides a very stable community, where all pupils feel valued and special. Pupils have a good understanding of their place within the local and world community and year 6 pupils are able to talk with confidence about *Fair Trade* and how this is important within a global context. Pupils' moral, spiritual and social development is very good and is enhanced by the many opportunities that exist for them to take responsibility and to develop independence, for example in the work of the School Council and as *Playground Buddies*. There are many excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual understanding through quiet reflection and thought. The school's wildlife area is an excellent example of this, which provides an opportunity to develop a genuine response to the wonders of nature.

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

Pupils respond enthusiastically to the interesting and varied acts of worship in which they take part daily. They have opportunities to be actively engaged in worship, notably on Mondays when year 6 pupils plan and lead worship. The school actively seeks feedback from pupils about the quality and impact of worship and uses this effectively to adjust future plans and expectations. As a result, pupils talk animatedly about acts of worship they have experienced and say that the values they learn about have a real impact on their everyday lives. Good use is made of responses, hymns and prayers which reflect the Anglican tradition well. The school has identified the need for pupils to be more closely involved in developing and writing their own prayers as an area for future development. The use of a candle signals the start of worship as a special time and the six icons at the front of the hall help to ensure that the multi-purpose hall is a space conducive to worship. Worship is well planned and effectively evaluated and therefore meets the needs of all pupils, whatever their age or experience. Clergy lead worship regularly and pupils worship in Church at regular intervals during the year. As a result of the outstanding acts of worship, pupils demonstrate a very good knowledge of the Church year and of bible stories, their meanings and how these relate to their everyday lives.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

This is because standards in RE are above average and the challenging RE curriculum, linked with high expectations of teaching staff, ensure that pupils make good progress in their understanding. Assessment has improved significantly since the last Section 48 inspection. The portfolio of pupils' work enables teachers to know what standards are expected and staff have a clear view of pupils' attainment and progress. In discussion, pupils show a very good understanding of the Christian religion and of other faiths. For example, pupils in year 5 (based on a good background knowledge of signs and symbols, the Beatitudes and New Testament stories and parables) are able to argue a strong case for Christianity to imaginary Roman soldiers. Pupils' insight is often impressive, for example one year 5 pupil's comment that *"The Bible is full of instructions for leading a good life"*. However, work in their books does not always match this very good verbal knowledge and understanding. The teaching of RE is consistently good and pupils engage in interesting and creative activities, enabling them to relate what they learn to their everyday lives. As a result, pupils are confident to talk openly about their own beliefs and those of others. RE is effectively led by an enthusiastic and well-informed subject leader, who monitors development closely and wherever possible ensures that links with other subject areas are made, for example the links with art in the pupils' paintings of *St George and the Dragon*.

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

The vision of the headteacher is central to the school's development as a Church school and she has had a key influence on this development during her time at the school. In this, she has been well supported by the clergy, staff and governors, ensuring that the school's Christian values and its strong family ethos lie at the heart of its day to day life. As one parent summed it up: *"Welcoming, inclusive, enjoyable!"* reflecting not only its family feel, but the sense of fun which is evident in learning and relationships. Governors are committed to the development of the school as a Church school and self evaluation is clear and accurate. However, actions identified for development have not been included in the school plan and therefore there is no clear view for its future strategic development as a church school. There are very strong links with the local church and community and there is strong evidence that the community is very proud of its school and the start in life that it provides for its young people.