



**Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report**  
Conducted as pilot for revised inspection framework 2009



**Hertford St Andrew**  
**Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School**  
**Calton Avenue, Hertford SG14 2EP**

**Diocese of St Albans**

**LA:** Hertfordshire  
**SIAS Inspection:** 25<sup>th</sup> March 2009  
**Previous S23 Inspection:** March 2006  
**URN:** 117397  
**Headteacher:** Ron Johnson  
**SIAS Inspector Name:** Lyn Field  
**SIAS Inspector No:** NS 151

#### **School Context**

The school is slightly smaller than average. Most pupils are White British and very few do not have English as their first language. A higher proportion than usual find difficulty in learning and, overall, the attainment of children when they start school is well below what is expected nationally.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Hertford St Andrew as a Church of England school are outstanding.**

Children and adults flourish under the quiet yet inspirational leadership of the headteacher. Christian service is a hallmark of the school and enables children to develop the skills and maturity to tackle the next stage of their lives, secure in the love of God.

#### **Established strengths**

- The strong Christian leadership of the headteacher and the deputy
- The exceptional pastoral care provided by all members of staff
- The self-confidence that worship builds in children
- The clear links that are drawn between Christian values and the strategies to enable children to achieve their best

#### **Focus for development**

- To increase parental involvement in collective acts of worship and prayer times

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

Christian values are the overriding principles in how the school effectively meets the needs of children and their families. Relationships mirror the love of God and pupils identify this as the reason why they feel equipped to cope with peer pressure and the demands of life outside school. They are confident to explain what Christian values mean to them, how there is no tolerance of prejudice in any form and the affirmation they receive from all the staff. These attitudes are promoted in RE lessons and the ideas shared in worship. There are clear public statements in displays and on the web-site to explain the Christian dimension to the school's prime educational purpose. For example, the school adds these words to explain its approach to the 'Every Child Matters' agenda: 'We put our trust in God, put him first and see him bless our work.' The impact of this is seen in the choices teachers make about what to teach and how to reward good work. They understand the importance of maintaining a spiritual thread through all subjects and pupils are confident to discuss the bigger issues that face humanity.

Pastoral care is exceptionally good. Parents say no child is left out and this support extends to families. Pupils know that the school is there for them but understand that they have responsibilities in return. They have a long-term commitment to helping a children's hospice and take on regular roles to help younger children in school. They recognise where help is needed and act without being asked because they learn from the excellent examples that are set by the headteacher and the staff.

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

Worship is clearly a joyful experience for pupils whatever their backgrounds. This is because all the leaders convey their enthusiasm for their own personal faith. The different Christian traditions they represent opens children's eyes to the breadth that exists in the church. Pupils enjoy worship and so behaviour is usually excellent. Music in worship is vibrant. The high quality of singing creates a sense of belonging as well as giving pupils confidence to participate in new experiences. For example, the number of boys and girls willing to take on solos in the session led by the gospel choir was impressive. The range of activities in worship boosts pupils' understanding of Christian teaching. 'Assembly Angels', gospel singers, the vicar and the Friday Club all add to the richness that the school staff provide and pupils remember the messages long afterwards. Typical examples of this are their explanations of the trinity and the parallels they draw between the lion, Aslan, and Jesus after listening to the story 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe'. The clergy are familiar and welcome figures in school. Pupils talk openly with them and their teachers about faith and gain reassurance from being able to ask about issues that trouble them. Although worship is usually lively and fun, on occasions it is rightly more formal and reflective. Parents value the way the school prepares pupils to cope with moments of sadness and crisis in their lives. In particular, they comment on the skills children develop to comfort their own families. In spite of this, the number of parents who come to school acts of worship is only just beginning to grow and this is an area the school would like to develop.

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

The level of support the school provides for individual pupils and their families is extraordinary. This involves individual counselling as well as sessions giving guidance on managing the practicalities of family life. It is always planned to meet the immediate needs of the people involved and is rooted in Christian service to the community. The personal faith of the headteacher and the deputy is visible in their leadership because it is lived out with humility. Their strong partnership, based on prayer, ensures that the school does not deviate from its prime function as a church school. The management systems are sharply focussed on preparing pupils for life beyond school and clearly demonstrate how attention to Christian values enables pupils to achieve their best. This commitment is shared by the staff team who go well beyond the call of duty to provide the best possible care for their pupils. They thrive on the freedom they are given to make decisions about what children are taught and as a result they have a very accurate understand of why pupils achieve as well as they do.

The clergy and foundation governors have first hand knowledge of how the school works on a daily basis. They speak passionately about how pupils benefit spiritually from space to think for themselves and talk easily about God. They quote examples of spontaneous prayer and singing and know from members of the community that children talk confidently about Christian values at home. They recognise that, because the ethos of the school is so well embedded, there is a need for governors to have a better idea of exactly how this is achieved in order to sustain it in the future. However, it is important to note that the limited documentation on this in no way detracts from the school's effectiveness as a church school.