

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Paul's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Langleybury

Langleybury Lane, Hunton Bridge, King's Langley WD4 8RJ

Diocese: St Albans

Local authority:	Hertfordshire
Date of inspection:	28 th November 2011
Date of last inspection:	17 th October 2006
School's unique reference number:	117417
Headteacher:	Mrs Sarah Winter
Inspector's name and number:	Nicola Sylvester

School context

St Paul's is an average size one-form entry primary school situated in the Watford Deanery of the St Albans Diocese serving families in the semi-rural location of Hunton Bridge.

Since the last inspection there has been a change of staff including a new headteacher and new incumbent to the local parish along with several key changes to the leadership team. A new Religious Education/Collective Worship (RE/CW) Co-ordinator has also been appointed.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Paul's school as a Church of England school are good.

The Christian ethos is evident in all aspects of the daily life of the school. The provision for spiritual development of learners is good and clearly impacts the behaviour of pupils and their relationships with one another and with adults in the school.

Established strengths

- The strong partnership between the school and church which contributes significantly to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.
- The school's development of the learners' understanding of the local, national and global communities including the wider Christian community.
- The behaviour of pupils and relationships with each other and with teaching and non-teaching staff.

Focus for development

- Make explicit the distinctive Christian values that underpin the school's provision and their impact on provision
- Undertake regular monitoring and evaluation of standards in RE involving key stakeholders including the governing body

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

The school's mission statement 'We aim high and work hard in all we do' can be seen on displays throughout the building and learners are aware of the high expectations as conveyed by the headteacher, wider staff team, parents and governors.

The distinctly Christian ethos is evident throughout and all stakeholders expressed how well the school cares for and respects each individual member of the school community. This is especially demonstrated in the provision for foundation stage pupils whose independence and confidence can be seen in the participation in worship which is exemplary. The displays celebrating the achievements of individual pupils are most effective in the foundation stage.

There is an open-door policy to parents who feel able to seek the help, support and advice of staff at any time. Parents stated that the pastoral provision at the school is highly effective particularly during times of difficulty such as family bereavement or times of great joy and celebration. Evidence from the recent parent survey points to the overwhelming confidence they have in the school and its provision of a safe and secure environment for their children.

All stakeholders refer to the good relationships between all members of the school community and the phrase 'mutual respect' was repeated by pupils, parents, governors and staff continuously. The school council and evidence from the pupil voice surveys demonstrate the school's commitment to listening to and acting upon the views of students of all ages.

The Christian values identified by the school of love, trust, forgiveness and wisdom are not readily identified by all stakeholders as the values that underpin the school's delivery. For example, while some parents and staff make reference to some of those values, none of the pupils are able to identify them or their impact on the curriculum. This is illustrated in the exchange between a teacher and pupil who identified trust as a gift in an RE lesson on the spirit of Christmas. The opportunity to discuss this as one of the school's values was not used and further exploration with the wider class not sought.

Parents, pupils, staff and governors are able to describe the difference being a church school makes to their daily lives. For example, pupils value acts of charity and kindness towards others and time to reflect and talk to God and Jesus.

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

Pupil engagement during collective worship is good. Attitudes are positive and the majority of learners seem to enjoy this time together. On the day of the inspection the worship led by the headteacher elicited wide participation from pupils across the key stages including children in the early years foundation stage.

Most pupils can articulate that participation in collective worship is part of belonging to a Church school. For instance, one pupil stated: "We are a church school; it is good to think about God." When asked about the importance of acts of collective worship some pupils could identify the impact it has on behaviour for example, "It helps us be a better person and follow the Ten Commandments."

Behaviour is good, demonstrating the importance of collective worship, and all staff attend along with pupils. One student identified this as a particular strength in this area saying that it is good that teachers participate as well and not just expect them to contribute.

Pupils and staff are clearly familiar with Anglican tradition and practice and the Vicar leads worship once a week which is highly valued by all stakeholders. There is a service once a month in the church and parents as well as pupils attend. Ministry through song is a key part of the worship with staff and pupils talking positively about opportunities to sing both in school and at church. Pupils across the key stages attend Eucharist services and pupils value being part of the 'Bread and Wine' service.

Key messages are not followed up and this limits the impact on the day/week and pupil understanding as does a lack of explicit reference to the Christian values that inform the school's vision.

The effectiveness of the Religious Education is satisfactory.

Much has been done to address the requirement set out in the last inspection report for the school to set challenging and creative tasks in RE that enable children to express the depth of their understanding.

Creativity in the curriculum has led to a range of teaching and learning strategies to increase pupil engagement and challenge. Pupils describe RE lessons as fun and relish the opportunity they get to do lots of different activities including expressing their feelings through art and role play.

It is clearly an important curriculum area and this is shown in the commitment of the subject leader supported by the line management of the headteacher. Pupil enthusiasm for RE is further evidence of the value this curriculum area has within the school. RE contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual and moral development with most stakeholders able to identify its impact on behaviour and relationships.

Support for delivery of RE has been provided for classroom teachers and the RE leader and much has been done to ensure pupils learn about other faiths including making use of a well developed partnership with a synagogue and local mosque.

Learners in some key stages make above average progress and some form of pupil tracking takes place. Pupil progress is assessed annually though its use to inform planning, teaching and learning is not clear. Evaluation and monitoring of standards in RE by the governing body is not currently developed and there is no named governor for the subject.

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

School leaders and governors have a vision of the distinctive Christian values that inform the daily life of the school. The school has a clear understanding of its development needs as a church school community and the capacity to improve is good.

The school leadership team and the governing body can identify how the distinctive Christian ethos influences most aspects of the school life, but have identified the need to make these more explicit.

The role of governors in the self-evaluation process is not clear and diocesan support so that they are adequately prepared for their role has not been sought. This lack of training means governors are not as effective as they could be in fulfilling their responsibility to monitor the impact of the distinctiveness of the school as a church school.

The partnership between the school, the church and wider local community, including parents is a real strength of the leadership. This is illustrated by links with other local primaries and the church secondary.