



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

**Park Street
Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
Branch Road, Park Street, St Albans AL2 2LX**



Diocese of St Albans

LA: Hertfordshire
SIAS Inspection: 11 January 2007
Previous S23 Inspection: 4 & 6 December 2002
URN: 117452
Headteacher: Mr Geoff Sturgess
SIAS Inspector Name: Bob Hopcraft
SIAS Inspector No: 484

School Context

Park Street is an average sized primary school, which has served the needs of the local community for over 150 years. Most pupils come from the village, but some are from surrounding areas. The proportion of pupils with special needs is broadly average, as is pupil mobility. The vast majority of pupils are from white British backgrounds. A large building project has recently been completed, which has provided spacious and airy classroom accommodation for Key Stage 1.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Park Street VA Primary School as a Church of England school are Good

Park Street is a good Church school, with many strengths of which it can be justly proud. It is particularly effective in promoting its Christian character and has very strong links with the Church and the local community. Its Christian foundation is central to its ethos and is reflected in all aspects of its daily life. The vision and leadership of the headteacher plays a key role in promoting this ethos. The school enjoys very strong support from its parent body.

Established strengths

- The clear vision of the headteacher for the school as a Christian community
- Outstanding behaviour, underpinned by universally agreed policies
- Excellent relationships between pupils and staff
- The effective relationship with Holy Trinity Church and the local community
- Good provision for Religious Education, ably led by an effective co-ordinator.

Focus for development

- To develop a formal system for the planning and evaluation of the quality of collective worship;
- To develop further assessment procedures in RE, to ensure that all pupils achieve the best they can;
- To provide a programme of continuing professional development to support teaching staff, particularly in relation to teaching about other faiths.

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

This is because all pupils feel valued and special and are treated with justice and respect. Pupils' progress is closely tracked and pupils of all abilities make good progress. Learners are secure, happy and confident and display high levels of self-esteem, maturity and independence. The school enjoys excellent support from its parents, who are appreciative of its ethos and provision, encouraging one parent to write "... *there is a caring attitude with a focus on teaching children to live by the Christian faith and values*". Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very well supported and there are many opportunities during the school day for spiritual reflection and understanding. Pupils demonstrate strong moral values and they relate sensitively to the beliefs of others and other cultures. Relationships are outstanding at all levels and the well-established School Forum provides a strong basis for ensuring that pupils' views are taken seriously. The widely agreed behaviour policy complements the school's Christian ethos and reinforces the excellent relationships. Displays are used very well to promote thought about deeper questions, such as "Where is God?" and some of the displayed work is very moving and thought-provoking. Symbols of the Christian faith are displayed in many parts of the school, including the entrance hall and communal corridors.

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

Worship is central to the school's life and underpins its Christian character. Pupils are actively involved in worship and enjoy it. Good opportunities are provided for reflection and spiritual growth. Acts of worship are stimulating and are used to promote key Christian values. These are well planned, but the strands of planning are currently disparate and would benefit from being drawn together into a coherent programme. No formal evaluation of the quality of worship is currently undertaken. Behaviour during worship is exemplary and an atmosphere of calm respect is promoted, through thoughtful use of music and prayer. The vicar of Holy Trinity church leads regular acts of worship. These are strongly bible-based, which contributes well to pupils' understanding and knowledge in RE as well as collective worship. Worship is well matched to the age and needs of pupils and staff take an active part in leading it. Worship is distinctively Christian in nature and reflects the Anglican tradition through the use of the Lord's Prayer and the School Creed. Good use is made of Holy Trinity Church for worship. Pupils attend services at Harvest and Easter and are encouraged to join Sunday services at other times.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

This is because lessons are well planned and tasks are challenging. As a result, pupils' attainment is above expected levels and progress is good. They are enthusiastic about the subject and are quick to develop an understanding of the concepts they are taught. Teaching is good and schemes of work for RE are comprehensive and clearly structured, ensuring that RE plays a central part in the school's taught curriculum. The school is beginning to use assessment data to track pupil progress, but this is not yet fully developed. Pupils are encouraged to think about what they are taught, to relate it to their daily lives and consider what it means to them; for example, on the day of the inspection, many of the lessons observed were designed to promote empathy and to consider how others might feel. The school ensures that pupils are introduced to an understanding of other faiths as part of the planned curriculum in RE; however, there is a need for continued staff development to ensure that they have sufficient depth of knowledge when teaching about other faiths. This has been recognised by the RE subject leader, who leads and develops the subject well. She has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in RE and monitors teaching and learning closely. There are a good range of resources for RE and ICT is particularly well used.

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

The school's documentation celebrates its Christian character and it is very clear, at all levels, that Park Street is a Church of England School. The headteacher provides strong leadership and has been instrumental in developing a clear vision for promoting the school's Christian character. As a result, pupils, parents, staff and governors are clear about the school's Christian foundation and all feel part of its Christian vision. The school has undertaken self-evaluation as a Church school, involving a range of stakeholders in the process and is working to sharpen and refine this. As a result, the school is very clear about its strengths and areas for development, although it is prone to be rather harsh on itself in its judgements. Governors are now more active in challenging the school to promote its distinctively Christian character and parents' views are sought and taken seriously. The school has outstanding links with the local Church and community and pupils take part in a wide range of community events. There are developing links with the local Baptist Church and a strong commitment to charitable giving.