



## Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

**St Swithun's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Lower School  
Ivel Road, Sandy SG19 1AX**

**Diocese of St Albans**

<b>LA:</b>	<b>Bedfordshire</b>
<b>SIAS Inspection:</b>	<b>9 December 2008</b>
<b>Previous S23 Inspection:</b>	<b>19-20 October 2005</b>
<b>URN:</b>	<b>109604</b>
<b>Headteacher:</b>	<b>Mrs Moya Whitehead</b>
<b>SIAS Inspector Name:</b>	<b>Ms Chris Westgarth</b>
<b>SIAS Inspector No:</b>	<b>44</b>

### **School Context**

St Swithun's Lower School is situated adjacent to the parish church. The headteacher has been in post since January 2008 and recent staff changes have resulted in a new leadership team and the headteacher has taken on a teaching commitment. There are 154 on roll and the majority of pupils are white British. Pupils have a wide range of abilities; the numbers of learners with a statement of Special Educational needs is higher than the national average. In 2007 the school was accredited with the Healthy School Award and in 2008 with International school status.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Swithun's Lower School as a Church of England school are good.**

St Swithun's is a good Church school which makes good use of opportunities to strengthen its Christian heritage. Behaviour and relationships are good and pupils respond positively to all that the school has to offer. Christian values underpin its work and the experiences provided for the pupils. Each child is viewed as being special and encouraged to grow in responsibility and respect, surrounded with love.

### **Established strengths**

- The school's care for all individuals which is underpinned by Christian values
- The outstanding links with the local Church and community

### **Focus for development**

- Develop effective strategies for the monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship by pupils, staff and Governors
- Ensure that prayer is embedded into to the life of the school
- Enhance the monitoring and evaluation procedures of the school as a Church school through training

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

Learners and stakeholders all speak positively about school, at the recent Christmas Fayre one visitor commented *'This school has a heart.'* Learners feel valued and they are encouraged to develop their independence and citizenship by taking part in a range of activities, including the School Council. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners is good. They are actively encouraged to develop an understanding of other faiths and cultures. This has been reinforced recently through achieving the International School Award in 2008. The school also promotes links with developing countries and in particular the work with the school in Ghana. The behaviour of the children is good and they are polite and welcoming. The children report that they feel safe and secure and as a result there are good levels of self-esteem. Whatever their religious faith, learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school environment is clean, tidy and well cared for, thus reinforcing the Christian ethos of care and respect for the surroundings and the world we live in. Evidence of its Christian character is now clear throughout the school, in displays and signage and this aspect of development has progressed well since the previous Section 48 inspection. The after school *'Holy club'* run by members of the church is well respected and the learners speak enthusiastically about their involvement at the club. In the playground the Playpals know their role well and there is a strong family atmosphere. The provision of the Buddy bus stop is good although during the inspection all pupils were actively involved in one type of play or another. Good community cohesion through the extended services provision of the breakfast club is to be commended and reinforces the caring ethos. The continued innovative work of learners, governors and the church, through the creation of a chasuble for Mothering Sunday is a good example of the strong links between school and church.

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

Most learners speak positively about assembly time and in particular the Open the Book assemblies and the involvement of Reverend Janet. At times a candle is lit and often images are projected to help with prayer and reflection. There are good levels of pupil participation, but learners commented that they would like to be more involved in praying. Learners are willing to answer questions and make suggestions. Learners enjoy worshipping in church and participating in special Services. They say worship helps them to understand the meaning of Christian values and the Bible. The recent collaborative work of year 4 and the incumbent to create a school prayer is to be commended and this now needs to be embedded into the life of the school. All staff attend Collective Worship. It is well planned, however monitoring and evaluation is at present informal. The development of effective strategies, with greater involvement from the Governing body, staff and learners, to monitor and evaluate the impact of collective worship will enable the school to build on current good practices.

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

The Headteacher and Governors have an emerging vision of the distinctive Christian Character of the school. There is a strong inclusive ethos and all are valued and respected. The clear leadership of the Headteacher provides a good example of care and concern for all members of the school family. The importance of Christian distinctiveness is reflected in its inclusion in the School Development Plan. The efficient governing body work well with the headteacher to ensure that the school is moving in the right direction and the foundation governors play an effective role in monitoring and maintaining the Christian ethos of the school. Stakeholders speak positively about the school and share a common vision for its future development as a Church school. Parents say that the school values their views and governors provide support and challenge. The headteacher clearly leads by example; her drive and enthusiasm, ably supported by the new senior management team, the governors and the clergy means that there is excellent capacity for St Swithun's to continue developing as a highly effective church school.