



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Andrew's Church of England VC Primary School
Mill Race, Stanstead Abbots, Ware SG12 8EZ



Diocese of St Albans

LA: Hertfordshire
SIAS Inspection: Monday 8 October 2007
Previous S23 Inspection: 8 and 10 July 2002
URN: 117407
Headteacher: Mrs Rosemary Woodall
SIAS Inspector Name: Bob Hopcraft
SIAS Inspector No: 484

School Context

St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is a smaller than average sized primary school, set in the large village of Stanstead Abbots. The school site benefits from well looked-after buildings, both traditional and modern, and well landscaped grounds which provide many opportunities for learning and play. Pupils come from a mixture of socio-economic backgrounds and attainment on entry is broadly in line with the national average, although it varies from year to year. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A significant proportion of pupils join the school during the school year, therefore mobility is high. A new headteacher has recently been appointed, who joined the school in September 2007.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Andrew's Church of England VC Primary School as a Church of England school are good

St Andrew's is a good Church school with good potential for further development. It promotes its Christian character well and has good links with the local Church and clergy. Relationships are good at all levels and there is a strong family ethos, which encourages all to achieve well and to take responsibility within a caring environment. There is a strong emphasis on teamwork and the new headteacher has sought to foster and further develop this in her early days in the school.

Established strengths

- The developing vision of the headteacher, governors and staff for the school as a Church school
- The strong family ethos which encourages all pupils to do their best
- The established links with the local Church and clergy
- The quality of relationships at all levels within the school
- The opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility and to gain independence

Focus for development

- Further develop the values education programme to ensure that it supports spiritual development
- Build on existing good practice, to ensure that the planning of collective worship is more focused and involves all those who lead it
- Further develop monitoring procedures to ensure that the impact and quality of collective worship are as good as they can be

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

This is because pupils feel valued and special, enjoy school and have high aspirations for the future. They say that their views are respected and that they feel safe at school. Christian values underpin all that the school does and these are demonstrated in the good relationships which exist at all levels and the strong emphasis on teamwork. As a result, pupils are encouraged to develop strong social and moral codes. This is recognised by parents, moving one to write "*I like the good morals that are taught... and hope that they follow my children through their lives*". Pupils display high levels of self-esteem and are encouraged to develop independence and responsibility, for example through the *playground mediators* initiative. They have a strong empathy for others and through charitable fundraising, recognise the needs of those less fortunate than they are. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural education is good and many of the displays around the school are designed to support pupils' understanding of other cultures. This area has been enhanced by the use of the *Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL)* materials within the school. The school has recognised the need to extend these within a values education programme to ensure that the spiritual development of pupils is better challenged and developed. Opportunities exist during the school day for quiet reflection and the school grounds provide many opportunities for exploring the wonder of the world around us. Pupils behave well and where conflicts arise they are dealt with in a spirit of reconciliation. The school celebrates its Christian character in many of the displays of pupils' work and by ensuring that the symbols of the Christian faith are clearly visible in the hall and other areas of the school.

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

This is because worship plays a key role in the life of the school. Acts of worship are stimulating and pupils enjoy them. They are able to talk about why we have worship and about the key values they have learned through their experiences. Worship is planned by themes and combines a number of strands, including use of the *SEAL* materials. The school is aware that planning could be more focused and that all those who lead worship should be involved in it. Acts of worship are currently recorded and brief evaluations about the appropriateness of the theme and its success are kept. However, the school does not currently monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and impact of acts of worship. Pupils are enthusiastic, responsive and encouraged to take an active part in worship and as a result they display a wide knowledge of Bible stories, Christian teachings and values and many are able to apply these to their everyday lives. They respond to questions, lead prayers and sing a wide range of songs to a live piano accompaniment. Parents, too, enjoy the opportunity to join their children for worship at particular times of the term. Prayer plays an important part in worship and pupils' involvement in helping to build the *prayer tree* during the act of worship on the day of the inspection was particularly impressive. Good use is made of the local Church for worship at agreed times during the year, including Harvest, Christmas and Easter and the local clergy plays an important and regular part in the worship at school.

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

The senior leadership team and the governors have undertaken a thorough and detailed self-evaluation of the school as a Church school and as a result have a clear view of its strengths and areas for development. With the arrival of the new headteacher, they are embarking on a review of the school's Christian vision, which will further strengthen their current self-evaluation and further enhance the teamwork which is such an important part of the school's ethos. Good use has been made of support and training offered by the Diocese and the school's development plan now contains a clear strategic plan for the future development of the school as a Church school. Staff have also been fully involved in these discussions. Parents are very supportive of the school and are aware of both its Church school status and the emphasis it lays on family values and on educating the whole child. There are productive and supportive links with the local church and the school is always searching for ways to extend and develop the existing links with the local community. There is a strong emphasis on helping others and this is reflected in the range of charities which the school supports, including *Jeans for Genes*, *Mini Pots of Care*, the *Stevenage Haven* and *Isabel Hospice*.