



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### St Paul's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Emsworth Crescent, Wolverhampton  
WV9 5NR

**Previous SIAMS grade: Good**

**Diocese: Lichfield**

Local authority: Wolverhampton

Dates of inspection: 12 October 2015

Date of last inspection: 1 December 2010

School's unique reference number: 104382

Headteacher: Jane Morris

Inspector's name and number: Marianne Phillips 586

#### School context

St Paul's Church of England Primary is a Voluntary Aided school, with a 52 place nursery, which serves a richly diverse population. Over 40% of the school's 217 pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Approximately 15 nationalities are represented, with 27% of pupils not having English as their first language. Yet the school presents itself as a unified family, united under God. Eighteen percent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and 33% are supported through Pupil Premium Funding. The Church of St Paul's is part of the school building enabling very strong links between church and school.

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

- The inclusive Christian character, which shapes all aspects of school life;
- The Christian witness of the headteacher and her deputy, providing a strong partnership which encourages pupils daily to '*learn with God as their firm foundation, together to achieve their best*';
- The focus upon core Christian values which are embedded in the Christian environment and lived out through the relationships between all members of this school family and the community it serves.

#### Areas to improve

- Develop the role of the foundation governors, ensuring they take a key role in formally monitoring and evaluating worship and religious education, involving a range of stakeholders to further drive the distinctive Christian character of the school;
- Develop a spiritual council made up of a selected group of pupils and parents to promote a global understanding of faith, across the range of beliefs, reflected in the school family;

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

This church school is outstanding in proclaiming its distinctive Christian character through an environment where children, regardless of background, faith or ability, thrive. Parents strongly endorse their appreciation of the work of the school in successfully uniting the richly diverse

school family, creating a sense of harmony and belonging. The core Christian values which underpin daily life reflect the teaching of Jesus, generating warm, nurturing support through the relationships that exist. Parents, of all faiths shared that, “*we are very happy with the spiritual development of our children, they have an opportunity to learn about religion through celebration and we then learn from them*”. They are often asked their opinion and findings from questionnaires reflect this and the very positive way they feel about the school. The curriculum is rich in providing exciting opportunities for learning, during and after school, through visits, like the one planned to the local Mosque and the residential visits to Dovedale and Weston Super Mare. Children use words like “*brilliant, exciting, amazing, fun, reliable, caring, supportive and creative*”, to describe these learning experiences. Children are happy and feel safe and protected. As the school council shared, “*we don’t have to worry if we fall out because there are teachers and other adults who care and sort things out for us*”. They also emphasised the importance of their work on the council, particularly through their fund raising. “*We are a Christian school and want to help others that don’t have as much as us*”. Pupils are keen to share how important prayer is to them and that is also evidenced by the wide variety of their prayers displayed in classrooms and around school. No space is wasted, and the children are consistently stimulated by vibrant displays and reflection areas, rich in artefacts and resources, which encourage them to engage and respond to God’s teaching. They all like the church being part of the school. As one noted, “*Our hall is like God’s Church, we share the bread in there during our Eucharist*”. Pupils enter the school displaying skills that are below national expectations. Over a quarter of the school has English as a second language. Despite these specific learning needs, the effective systems and skilled support provided by the school staff, enables each individual to progress rapidly academically, so that by the time they leave they are at least in line or above national targets. The school uses assessment strategies effectively to target vulnerable pupils and provide support to accelerate their rate of progress, narrowing the gap between them and their peers. This was confirmed by the school’s internal tracking data, which showed attainment to be strongly good. The minister actively supports the school in leading worship and teaching aspects of RE, making the experiences fun and memorable. The school leaders have established links with the King’s School and St Michael’s CE Primary, Tettenhall, Castle Batch Community School Weston Super Mare and the Herman Franke School in Hamburg as part of their work to develop an understanding of Christian and other faiths globally and locally. The school leaders want to do more to ensure that all faiths and cultures represented by their pupils and families are understood, respected and celebrated. In these and many other ways, this church school is influencing and improving the lives of their pupils and the community at large through its Christian distinctiveness.

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

The very good act of worship, led by the minister, used ‘Mr Potato Head’ to emphasise that, “*we are all part of one body in God*”, through reference to Paul’s letters in I Corinthians. The pupils had fun whilst worshipping and the service concluded with a ‘Wow moment’, where the pupils all sang ‘The Grace’, some signing the words as they left the hall, generating a sense of spiritual harmony that was very powerful. Pupils were also comfortable engaging with responses and actions, triggered by the lighting of the candle, acknowledging the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Through prayer and reflection pupils were asked to focus their thoughts from the worship experience, to help guide their day. It is clear that worship is central to the life of the school and through it children learn about Anglican tradition, particularly during the regular weekly worship led by the minister. Pupils regularly lead class worship and some Eucharist services. They behave excellently and use their class reflection areas and ‘WOW’ books to share their views of the worship experiences. School leaders gather the views of stakeholders, including parents, who are encouraged to attend worship and celebrations regularly. The informal approaches used are effective in providing opportunities for ‘pupil voice’ and the views of parents to be heard. However, there is no formal system in place to involve foundation governors in engaging with stakeholders to monitor the quality of worship and RE in school. This is a focus for further development, ensuring the worship experience is

effective in nurturing the spiritual development of the pupils.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Religious education is an important feature of the daily life of the school. The RE coordinator and school leaders have worked closely with the diocesan adviser to ensure the quality of RE is continually improving. The impact of this support is clearly evidenced through the consistency and quality of planning and the focus upon pupils 'learning from' the RE experiences. The two lessons observed provided many good and some outstanding examples of learning offered through 'All Change' activities in Year 6 and the story of 'Joseph and his coat of many colours' in Year 2. Both lessons required the pupils to respond individually to targeted questions from their teachers, designed to challenge higher order thinking in response to biblical and Christian teaching. For example, the Year 6 pupils reflected upon racism, evidenced through the life of Martin Luther King. They were asked to write a few key words summing up their feelings and the activity concluded with those sheets of paper being physically destroyed to, "*help eliminate racism in the world*". The Year 2 pupils empathised with the feelings of Joseph and other characters in the story, highlighting the way Joseph was used by God. The lesson outcomes observed were at least in line with Diocesan (National) expectations with many pupils exceeding these targets. The pupils were motivated and fully engaged throughout. The school follows guidance from the Diocese about the planning themes and assessment procedures used and has received training from the diocesan advisor as part of the Service Level Agreement. RE is also monitored through observation by the RE coordinator. The minister supports the teaching of some aspects of RE. One example of this involved the pupils of Year 4 learning about marriage and participating fully with the process, including a full wedding service for the "*bride and groom and their guests*". RE links closely with worship and PSHE and acts as a vehicle to develop communication skills. There is a good balance between learning from and learning about religion and therefore RE as an effective tool used to explore faith issues that are important in shaping the lives of the pupils.

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

On the day of the inspection the headteacher was absent, recovering from a minor operation. Despite her absence it was clear from the evidence gathered that she provides a strong Christian witness. One example of this was explained through the words of one child responding to a question about Christian role models. He said, "*Jesus teaches us to forgive and the headteacher is a real Christian because she forgives us over and over again*". There is also clear evidence of the close, effective partnership between the headteacher and the deputy, who liaised with the inspector throughout the day providing clear evidence of the shared commitment to the development of this church school. They are knowledgeable about their school strengths, their pupils and the families they serve. In the words of the minister, "*this is a Christian school where the core values underpin everything and where faith is not confined to worship and RE but bleeds into other subjects, guiding learning and staff management*". The school leaders use effective self-evaluation to address areas of development and are working to support foundation governors in developing their monitoring role in school. This is good and strengthens the quality of leadership in practice. Parents expressed that, "*they feel the presence of God in the school...that the school links closely with the community and is highly respected*". This was also confirmed by a representatives from the community. Learning is fun, yet challenging and results in good attendance. Teachers and governors have opportunity to train and network with other schools, strongly supported by the Diocese. The developmental points from the previous inspection have been met. Christian values, vision and prayer are explicit, respected and appreciated by stakeholders who respond positively to the influence of the school in their lives.

SIAMS report October 2015, St Paul's CE VA Primary, Wolverhampton WV9 5NR.

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