



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Paul's Church of England (C) Infant School and Sure Start Children's Centre

The Cardinals
Tongham
Farnham
GU10 1EF

Diocese: Guildford

Local authority: Surrey

Date of inspection: 11 June 2014

Date of last inspection: November 2008

School's unique reference number: 125148

Headteacher: Mrs S Brown

Inspector's name and number: Dr Glyn Willoughby 637

School context

St Paul's is a smaller than average infant school serving the local village and neighbouring area. The large majority of pupils are of a white British heritage and the proportion speaking English as an additional language is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils who trigger additional government funding is also below the national average whilst the proportion with different levels of special needs is broadly in line with the national average.

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

- The strong leadership and vision of the headteacher, supported by staff and governors, in developing the school's inclusive Christian character.
- The impact of the family focused and nurturing Christian ethos upon personal development.
- The commitment of the vicar to the continued growth of the working partnership between the church and the school with the resulting benefits for pupils.

Areas to improve

- Evaluate how explicit Christian values develop individual spirituality and underpin the promotion of the Christian ethos.
- Provide greater opportunities for pupils to experience a wider variety of ways to pray and to be involved in the planning, leading and evaluation of worship.
- Embed a self-evaluation programme that involves pupils and the wider school community in measuring the impact of the Christian ethos on personal development, academic achievement and wellbeing.

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

The school has a clear set of aims and values that underpin the life of the school. For example, they are exhibited in the happy and purposeful ethos characterised by kind and polite pupils who enjoy coming to school, feel safe and like their teachers.

Through their manner and actions, caring staff emulate the drive and dedication of the headteacher to 'live out' the inclusive and friendly Christian ethos. They are committed to enabling each pupil to succeed as they develop self esteem, build positive relationships and a motivation for learning. In this way the school's Christian character makes a strong impact upon the academic achievement, personal development and wellbeing of the pupils, including those with special needs. Relationships throughout the school are excellent and pupils show a high level of trust and respect for each other as well as a growing motivation to help others and care for their environment.

The worship programme enables pupils to gain a clear understanding of the way in which the school's distinctive Christian values affect their lives. For example, one pupil explained how the Bible story of Noah's Ark, illustrating the value 'hope', had inspired him to believe that, just as Noah, he would 'try and help animals'.

Religious education enables pupils to gain a growing respect for diverse communities. It also enables them to make good progress as they learn about the Christian faith and all other religions. Pupils work well together and support each other when they need help. Good progress and learning was observed when careful planning, combined with focused support, enthused and challenged them. However, less emphasis placed upon learning from different religions reduces opportunities to reflect on deeper issues of meaning and purpose.

The focus on specific values in the worship programme as well as the co-ordination of opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural growth across the curriculum, has enabled the school to progress each pupil's emotional and spiritual development. The school now plans to evaluate how explicit Christian values develop individual spirituality and underpin the promotion of the Christian ethos.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Pupils speak enthusiastically about their enjoyment of worship which has a significant impact upon their spiritual development. The vicar leads worship regularly and special services are held in church. These occasions give positive messages about the strong relationship that exists between church and school as well as providing a good understanding of church tradition and developing a growing understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The attendance of many parents when worship is held in church, reinforces the importance of the role of the local church within the whole school community.

In the worship observed, led by the vicar, pupils showed they value the importance of the occasion as they listened carefully and responded enthusiastically to questions and when singing. Simple rituals including familiar prayers and songs enable pupils to take an active part. This interactive approach is at the heart of the school's inclusive ethos and confirms the importance of worship in the life of the school. A focus for development arising from the previous inspection for pupils to have more opportunities to be involved in taking an active role in worship and in creating their own prayers has been addressed.

Since the last inspection the worship programme has been rewritten and the revised themes are each based on a different Christian value linked with Bible stories and the teachings of

Jesus. In this way pupils explore and gain a growing understanding of the meaning of each value. Those spoken to recalled stories they had heard and could relate the meaning of the value to their own lives.

There is a strong sense of trust and partnership between church and school and this relationship creates a secure environment in which pupils of all faiths and none feel comfortable in openly discussing their feelings. The worshipping life of the school is vibrant because of the frequent conversations between headteacher and vicar that continually review and revise pupils' experiences. The effectiveness of the programme has advanced considerably since the last inspection and the school now plans to increase the opportunities for pupils to be involved in planning, leading and evaluating worship.

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

The dedicated headteacher has a clear vision of the way distinctive Christian values are lived out in the daily life of the school. She has the full support of staff and governors in developing this vision. A nurturing Christian ethos based upon commitment and team work recognises the importance of all staff and creates a strong sense of community and unwavering support for pupils and their families.

Led by the experienced chair, supportive governors make a good contribution and informally monitor the distinctiveness of the school. In order to gain a clearer understanding of the school's effectiveness as a church school, they understand the need to embed a self-evaluation programme that involves pupils and the wider school community in securing the impact of the Christian ethos on personal development, academic achievement and wellbeing.

Governors support the headteacher in recognising the benefit of developing staff and governors as leaders of church schools and encourage opportunities for professional and personal training.

The strong partnership between the school and the church has been further advanced since the last inspection and has formed the foundation upon which the many linked activities with the church and community have been developed. An example is the sowing of poppy seeds across the two sites to commemorate the anniversary of the beginning of World War One. The vicar, who is also a governor and appointed since the previous inspection, is a regular and welcome visitor who is highly respected as the physical and visible presence of the church. As well as providing pastoral support her involvement in the development of worship has resulted in highly effective practice in this area.

Parents spoken to were supportive of the school and of 'understanding and helpful' staff who, as one said, 'are always there for you when you need help'. They recognise the value of the links between school and church and appreciate the resulting benefits for their children that arise from the range of local and wider community links, as well as from fund raising for different charities.

The school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship and religious education.

SIAMS report June 2014. St Paul's Church of England (C) Infant School,
The Cardinals, Tongham, Farnham, GU10 1EF

