



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Paul's Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School

Calder Road,
Rawtenstall, Rossendale
Lancashire, BB4 8HT

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Manchester

Local authority: Lancashire

Date of inspection: 25th June 2015

Date of last inspection: March 2010

School's unique reference number: 119367

Headteacher: Suzanne Howard

Inspector's name and number: Stephen Burrow 622

School context

St Paul's is a slightly larger than average-sized primary school. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action and at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The Governors have recently been through a process of re-branding the school, which has raised its Christian profile. They have added 'Church of England' into the school title, created a new school logo and made changes to the wording of the mission statement. The school is also a 'Forest School'.

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

- Each child is highly valued and nurtured as an individual in a caring Christian environment, based on Christian values, enabling them to grow academically, spiritually and socially as members of the school family.
- The strong, mutually supportive links with the local church make a significant contribution to the school's Christian character and the spiritual development of all members of its community.
- Outstanding leadership by the headteacher, supported by staff and governors, and promoted by the recent re-branding, demonstrates the school's clear Christian character and mission.

Areas to improve

- To involve more pupils on the worship committee in order to increase the pupil voice, so that their ideas and thoughts can be shared and discussed to further enrich the experience of worship.
- To further improve the evaluation of worship by establishing a time where pupils' individual comments can be shared and reflected on within each class.

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

The distinctive Christian character is evident in all areas of school life and is central to the ethos and vision. Christian values are explicitly expressed and deeply embedded, clearly understood by all members of the school family. These values, which enhance the spiritual development of all members of the school community, are understood, articulated and embraced by everyone. As a result, strong mutually nurturing and supportive relationships exist throughout the school. Consequently pupils feel safe, happy, valued and cared for. Adults provide excellent role models, displaying Christian values which are mirrored by the pupils. Teachers know each child as a unique individual and ensure that their academic and personal needs are fully met. The high profile of religious education (RE) within the school makes a significant contribution to the Christian character of the school. The use of a prayer tree and well utilised reflection areas in all classrooms provide opportunities for pupils to think and quietly pray. This makes a very significant contribution towards their spiritual development. The school's curriculum is rich and varied, providing a wide range of experiences, especially those offered by the school as a Forest School. These contribute well to pupils' enjoyment of school and to their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is well supported by the school's distinctive Christian ethos. Pupils leave St Paul's school as well-adjusted, happy and caring individuals who have been well prepared for the next stage in their education. One pupil said, 'We are all different but still brothers'. As a result of the caring and nurturing environment, pupils are supported extremely well in their learning. This encourages them to strive to meet the high expectations and challenges set by their teachers. Pupils are eager to accept responsibility as demonstrated in their eagerness to secure roles in the pupil leadership groups. Displays around the school are vibrant and stimulating. These lift the spirit and provide both reflection and discussion opportunities, which contribute to a deep spiritual understanding of Christian life. Pupils have a clear understanding of the Christian faith and gospel values because of the way the Mission Statement is lived out in daily life. Because of the schools' strong emphasis on caring for each other, pupils enjoy raising money for charities such as the NICU (neonatal intensive care unit). Their awareness of Christianity as a world-wide faith is well embedded. This is supported by their understanding of other faiths and cultures gained through visits to different places of worship. This enables them to respect and understand differences, similarities and shared values.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is central to the daily life of the school. With its strong Christian foundations, worship drives forward the school's Christian values. It is through the messages given in collective worship that the school promotes its explicit Christian vision and provides opportunities for pupils to encounter God. It is very well planned by a worship committee made up of pupils, teachers, governors and the curate. Themes are developed around the school's core values, the Bible and the teachings of Jesus. Christian festivals, together with those of other world faiths are also celebrated. As a result, pupils enjoy and highly value their worship experiences, both in school and in church. One pupil commented, 'Worship is special because it's a time to reflect and talk to God'. The differing needs of pupils are met through whole school, Key Stage and class worship as well as opportunities to worship in church. Pupils benefit from a range of styles of worship with the curate, staff and visitors leading worship on a regular basis. Weekly class-led worship involves pupils in planning and delivery, enriching the experience of worship through their shared ideas and thoughts. On the inspection day, worship on the theme of 'gentleness' was enhanced by a worship table with a cross and candle. Year 6 pupils took responsibility for the music and slideshow presentation, which created a reverent and reflective atmosphere. Pupils entered and left quietly, utilising the opportunity to reflect on the message displayed on the large screen. All staff join in worship and support pupils in developing their spiritual awareness. Prayer, silence and reflection time all contribute significantly to pupils' spiritual development. Pupils write and use their own prayers, which are

hung on a prayer tree, and then dedicated to God during collective worship. Pupils have a very good understanding of bible stories. They can explain Jesus' place at the heart of the Christian faith, together with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, enhanced by the school's RE teaching. The school has effective procedures in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of worship. Findings are then used to influence ongoing improvements which ensure that the spiritual needs of pupils are fully met. Strong links with the church make a very significant contribution to the nature of worship. Parents attend class and church services, thus strengthening links between school, church and community.

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

The headteacher, through her strong personal Christian faith, articulates with commitment and passion a strong vision which is explicitly rooted in Christian teaching. This vision is shared and understood by the school's senior leaders, staff and governors. This gives everyone the opportunity to contribute to decisions with their ideas valued. Senior leaders have a clear understanding of what it means to lead a church school and carry out their roles very effectively. Potential future leaders of church schools are prepared well and there is a strong emphasis on supporting professional development and leadership. All staff are inducted well into what is expected of them in relation to promoting the Christian ethos of the school. They regularly consider the impact on pupils of living out the mission statement. This leads to a strong focus on meeting the needs of the individual child through a well-developed and effective self-evaluation process. This places the uniqueness of each child at the heart of school improvement. The recent school re-branding demonstrates the emphasis governors place on the significance of being a church school and its importance in whole school development. They are actively involved in monitoring and evaluation. They receive regular RE and worship updates from the headteacher, nominated governor and the worship committee. Governors support and challenge the school leadership team in all areas of school improvement and know what the school needs to do to improve further. Issues from the previous inspection have been addressed, with continuous improvement managed through rigorous, honest self-evaluation. One governor likened the school to a ship; it has a working crew, not passengers on board. Pupils are confident that their voice is heard with their ideas and opinions valued and acted upon as part of the school's decision-making processes. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and there is a strong St Paul's Parents' Association. They say the school listens to their views. They also say that their children enjoy school and are happy, safe and nurtured within a Christian environment. They agree that the school's Christian ethos is a prominent aspect of school life that allows their children to explore the meaning of faith and belief openly.

SIAMS report, June 2015, St Paul's CofE Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Rawtenstall, BB4 8HT