



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 Voluntary Aided Primary School

St Paul's Avenue
Buttershaw
Bradford
BD6 1ST

Previous SIAMS grade: Satisfactory

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: West Yorkshire and the Dales

Local authority: Bradford

Dates of inspection: 7 December 2015

Date of last inspection: March 2012

School's unique reference number: 107319

Headteacher: Helen Malt

Inspector's name and number: Doug Masterton No. 483

School context

St Paul's Voluntary Aided Primary School is situated in the Southern suburbs of Bradford. There are 208 children on roll. The majority are from families of White British heritage and a proportion (around 15%) from Pakistani, Indian, West Indian and other White backgrounds. An average proportion of children are eligible for free school meals but a higher proportion is allocated pupil premium funding. The school is adjacent to the parish church. A new headteacher was appointed in January 2014 and a significant proportion of teachers are new to the school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Pauls as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The school has re-established children's high levels of achievement and progress through an unshakeable commitment to learning within a community inspired by Christian faith.
- Children's confidence in using prayer and their contributions to their collective worship powerfully boost their maturity and spiritual growth.
- Religious education is woven deeply into the learning and culture of the school.
- Strength of leadership and management at all levels has rapidly transformed the effectiveness of provision. Children now thrive once more.

Areas to improve

- Develop children's skills in approaching an understanding of Christianity and faith informed by argument, objectivity, historical perspective and more detailed theology.
- Help children to monitor and record their own spiritual development as they learn to apply the school Christian values to their lives and work.

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

During the last two years there has been a transformation in the effectiveness of the school. From a position where the school was graded by OFSTED in 2013 as requiring improvement, the progress and achievement of the children has dramatically improved. Standards reached and children's progress are now significantly above average. The school is passionately committed to all aspects of children's moral social and cultural education, and specifically to their spiritual development. It is promoted not only through learning but also through prayer which is woven intrinsically into the life of the school thus offering the space for God to shape children's response. This benefits all children; none more so than those having additional learning needs whose progress is also very secure. The school mission, 'to nurture and promote achievement for all within a Christian environment', with associated Christian values is applied to all aspects of school work and curriculum. Children recognise when they have applied these values to their understanding and behaviour. They are ready to begin noting the growth of their own spiritual development. Children are well behaved, compassionate, considerate, keen to learn, concerned for others and very ready to use prayer in response to situations they meet. This stems from the perspectives of faith and teaching from the Bible that the school carefully promotes. In consequence children are very open, freely expressing what they have been taught, think and believe. They need further support to give them the tools of philosophy in order to analyse, understand, defend and interpret the Bible record and associated questions of faith. The school is highly inclusive. Parents, including those from other faith backgrounds greatly support the values the school teaches. Relationships at every level are characterised by love, care and respect. Adults and children work comfortably together. The school teaches about the other religions represented in the Bradford community and children recognise readily the commitment to a common humanity and well-being that they all share. Religious Education (RE) has a very high profile in the school being bound seamlessly with collective worship and the teaching of other subjects. It makes a powerful contribution to each young person's growing maturity.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is at the heart of life at St Pauls. It inspires the commitment and daily work of all children and adults. Planning by school leaders and governors is thorough and inspirational incorporating many topics, the structure of the church calendar, inclusion of other faith festivals, and varied contributors. Collective worship is unmistakably Anglican in character and looks at Christian values applied in many contexts. An outstanding feature is the extent to which children (particularly the older ones) regularly contribute to and lead collective worship themselves. Typically, children include the liturgy of welcome, reflection, prayer and dismissal as part of a thought-provoking subject they have researched, such as human rights. This develops their confidence to approach and suggest prayer. Prayer boxes in each class room are well used. Children are given time and space to reflect and respond in collective worship and in lessons. The resulting inner strength within the school that ensues was well demonstrated during a recent time of stress and grief following the death of a member of staff. Another outstanding feature is the way that collective worship introduces children to worship in church. Years 5 and 6 go to church each Wednesday where they are taught by the parish priest about Holy Communion and, with their parents' agreement, can choose to receive bread and wine. The church also hosts joint worship for the parish and school on one Sunday each half term and other special services and there is a seamless partnership. Collective worship and RE both develop an understanding of theology. Children study Pentecost and this means that they can articulate a concept of God in terms of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Intrinsic to collective worship is the extent to which its impact is constantly evaluated. Feedback forms are issued to different individuals at each event and improvement constantly looked-for. With its focus on helping children and adults to meet, share and pray together, collective worship has a profound influence on the life of the school, nurturing and refreshing the well-being and Christian witness of all members of the school community.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE is given at least 5% of curriculum time and themes extend frequently into other subjects. Children's work is monitored through a highly developed system of assessment with end of topic assessments graded both against former national curriculum levels and expected standards. Thus the school is confident to report that standards and progress in the subject match the above average levels achieved by children in their core subjects. This has been brought about by RE being taught as a specialist subject. Across the school, children receive teaching that is consistently good and often outstanding offering them substantial intellectual content and challenge to their spiritual understanding at every age. Children are frequently asked to explore, discuss, dramatise and collaborate concerning the ideas and topics they meet such as the concepts of persecution, compassion and repentance associated with the story of the conversion of Saul. Children are set demanding tasks with appropriate challenges to their levels of language and conceptual understanding. Their work is carefully marked and their corrections are also closely monitored. This is the same successful process that supports children's good general acquisition of literacy. In addition, the continuous addition of representative children's work in RE, pasted into Big Books that are found in every class room, means that other teachers can draw on and integrate themes into other class activities. The school follows the diocesan syllabus to plan learning that is seamlessly linked to themes included within collective worship. RE lessons themselves include elements of worship such as prayer. Teaching and learning is closely monitored and evaluated by senior staff and governors. RE is a very secure foundation for realisation of the mission of the school.

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

The school mission and associated Christian values has clarity and purpose. It is unmistakably a place which seeks to ensure that its daily life and work towards excellence are inspired by Christianity and worship. Staff and governors have an unshakeable commitment to this process. The recent appointment of the present headteacher has given the school leadership with confidence and determination to improve. The pace of change rapidly gathered momentum. Her vision, extensive detailed planning, perseverance and management skills have galvanised both long serving and new members of staff into forming a cohesive team with a shared commitment to success and the promotion of the school ethos. School self-evaluation, compiled from the evidence of staff, parents and governors, is comprehensive and challenging. Strategic planning, monitoring, review are now intrinsic tools used by all staff and governors. Their use at every level to drive improvement has brought about the very great improvement in school effectiveness. Indicative of the energy of leaders is the fact that needed improvements, identified by the school evaluation just a few months ago, have already been implemented. Issues identified in the last inspection concerning evaluation, diversity and RE provision have long been tackled. The renewed vigour to the work of the school has quickly been recognised by the local community and the school is once again heavily oversubscribed. Parents hold the work of the school in high esteem. Strength and resilience has also come from the way that leadership skills in this church school have been strengthened at every level with staff in all positions confident to take forward their work and contribute to other aspects of provision. The school and parish church are inextricably joined in partnership. St Paul's is an ally for church mission, an outlet for the expression of community concern supporting charities, a resource to respond to human need helping families needing support and a bridge for respect and understanding towards other faith communities. From the involvement of the parish priest to participation in cathedral worship the school fosters its links to its wider Anglican community. Religious education and collective worship meet statutory requirements.

SIAMS report. December 2015 St Pauls CE Primary School, Buttershaw, Bradford BD6 1ST