



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 Primary School

The Common, Chipperfield
Kings' Langley, Hertfordshire
WD4 9BS

Diocese: St Albans

Local authority: Hertfordshire

Dates of inspection: 16th June 2014

Date of last inspection: 4th June 2009

School's unique reference number: 117441

Headteacher: Mrs Norah Tattersall

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Judith Ruff 528

School context

St Paul's Church of England Primary is of average size in the Ecclesiastical Parish of Chipperfield. It serves children within this parish and beyond. 91% of pupils are from White British heritage. 3% speak English as an additional language. 8.6% of pupils are in receipt of free school meals, lower than the national average. 9.5% of pupils have special educational needs, at school action plus, above the national average. The parish church of St Paul's is directly opposite the school. There are excellent partnerships with the local Baptist and Catholic churches. The Rector has been in post for a year.

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

- The outstanding Christian leadership of the headteacher and governors, who provide and promote an excellent vision for the school, encapsulated through the statement 'Love to Learn, Learn to Love' resulting in exceptional school community relationships
- Outstanding opportunities for pupils' spiritual development, enabling pupils to reflect on their life journey and understand the importance of faith and belief for Christians and those from other religions
- Excellent RE provision, built on quality first hand experiences and stimulating and exciting cross curricular skills, enabling pupils to use their creative skills and talents to the full
- Christian values which are deeply embedded across the school, giving pupils the language and sensitivity to respect and 'love your neighbour as yourself'

Areas to improve

- Develop external areas to enhance pupils' opportunity for reflection and stillness
- The RE Subject Leader to report to the full Governing Body on standards and progress in RE, so that governors can fully appreciate the outstanding pupil outcomes across the school

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

'St Paul's provides our children with a spiritually safe environment' typifies the overwhelmingly positive views of a large number of parents who came into school to talk first hand to the inspector. Those present gave numerous examples of their children linking school values to Bible stories, as in the recently shared Zacchaeus story demonstrating the compassion of Jesus to sinners. Pupil achievement is exceptionally high, with pupils understanding their individual responsibilities to use talents and gifts well, including in service to others. Behaviour is excellent and nurtured through initiatives such as 'Playground Patrol' and Year 5 Play Leaders whose interventions are based on the key values of love and forgiveness. The three year values programme has become firmly embedded in the school life and gives pupils the vocabulary and understanding of the obligation on Christians to follow the teachings of Christ through words and actions. As one young child said 'My friend cut his knee and I got him a chair and a tissue –that's compassion.' Around the school there is beautiful visual imagery of Christian symbols, both child and craftsmen made. These lift the spirits and act as both reflection and discussion opportunities. Internally, classroom reflection areas are well used. However, external areas do not currently match this provision for providing opportunities to be still and reflect quietly. Attendance is very high. Pupils love coming to school and appreciate all the opportunities for sharing and friendship that being part of this loving, close family community brings. Relationships within the school are exceptionally high quality. Parents and governors trust the headteacher and her team to be open, honest and inclusive in their approach to all. A recent staff weekly prayer group has also strengthened quality of relationships, building a forum for sharing concerns and offering thanks. Spiritual development is outstanding, enhanced by opportunities to engage with the 'Spirited Arts Competition', work on 'Spiritual Journeys' and the high profile that RE has within the school, making links to the creative arts and contributing through many examples of exceptionally high teacher knowledge, skills and practice. Pupils have a good understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith. Pupils in Year 2 have been studying a Tanzanian village and had watched a video of a celebration mass from both this place and the local Catholic church. They understand through the excellent links with the local Baptist chapel and Catholic church about the diversity of practice amongst the different Christian denominations.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is of central importance to the life and sustenance of this church school. It reinforces the chosen values, teaches pupils about Bible characters, Anglican sacraments and introduces relevant responses from the liturgy. The 'Gathering, Engaging, Responding and Sending' (GERS) structure for worship enables pupils to understand a clear framework for worship. Staff and governors greatly value the collective worship opportunities. It brings together the whole school community to praise, pray and reflect together. The Collective Worship Committee, comprising staff, governors and pupils, through its fortnightly meetings offers excellent opportunities for the evaluation of collective worship. Pupils' understanding and appreciation of collective worship has grown significantly. Discussions with pupil representatives demonstrated impact in several areas- firstly, on the quality of provision through increased use of drama to retell Bible and other faith stories and secondly a focus on the importance of preparing for worship. This included the importance of showing respect by being quiet and receptive to the musical and visual stimuli within the school hall. The weekly class based worship is a direct response to the pupils' request for more age appropriate worship and discussion opportunities. Pupils engage with the planning and leadership of worship through writing prayers, dramatic sketches, musical contributions and reading Bible passages. Opportunities for prayer across the school are well developed through topic themes, use of the prayer tree and through the Friday 'sharing assemblies'. Two acts of collective worship were observed. One in the Foundation Stage led by the local Baptist minister, who is also a governor. The second a whole school act of worship on the theme of 'The Trinity' led by the Rector. Both acts of worship were engaging, inclusive and provided excellent opportunities, both for pupil responses and reflection. Pupils sang beautifully, picked up new songs very quickly. The Lord's Prayer was sung very movingly to close worship using relevant actions to support the words. Pupils interviewed had a good understanding of the Gospel stories and the teachings of Jesus. Pupils representatives from as young as six years old were able to describe the

Trinity as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They knew that prayers were often addressed in this form. A recent releasing of balloons as part of the Ascension Day service, also gave the opportunity for pupils to write messages proclaiming the love of Jesus. The church is used well each term for festivals and the end of year 'Leavers' Service'.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE is taught outstandingly well and led to a very high standard across the school. The majority of the discrete RE teaching is provided by a subject specialist, enabling excellent subject knowledge and teaching practice to lead to exceptionally good pupil outcomes. However, class teachers are very well involved in visits out to faith buildings, delivering themed RE days and weeks and ensuring that good, meaningful links are made to RE within the whole school cross-curricular topics chosen. Progress is rapid due to meticulous assessment and tracking of knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject. Pupils are supported in their 'next steps in learning' through clear, differentiated success criteria and formative marking, reinforcing expectations of how to improve work further. Excellent first hand learning opportunities are provided through visits to a range of faith buildings. Year 3 and 4 pupils were visiting a Jewish synagogue on the morning of the inspection. They came back 'buzzing' with excitement at what they had seen and learnt. Importantly, these experiences are those which stay long term in the pupils' memories. Two parents, one Jewish, one Hindu praised the school's approach to learning about non-Christian faiths, which opens up a number of ways in which families can also grow in understanding of different beliefs and practices. The Jewish father commented on a child who visited their home immediately identifying the mezuzah. Another parent spoke of her wish to undertake a family visit to a Hindu temple. A recent pupil survey shows that RE is popular with the majority of pupils (88% in October 2013). RE supports the school values and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils extremely well. The enquiry based, cross curricular approach is both inspiring and exciting for pupils. They learn to treat religious artefacts with care and respect, such as in the follow up RE lesson to the synagogue, where they were looking at a kippah and a tallit prayer shawl.

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

The leadership of this school is outstanding. It is led by an inspirational headteacher, who understands the importance of faith and belief to people from diverse religions, whilst respecting those who have no faith. She has a profound influence on the school community. She knows her staff well and nurtures them to reach their potential, encouraging them to take on new challenges and to be open to the opportunities that teaching in a church school offer. Outstanding standards of achievement are linked to the strong Christian values ethos within the school, where perseverance, appreciation and responsibility shape pupils' lives and work ethic. Governors are also strong and fully committed to the vision and development of the school as a school which serves the local community, offering first hand experiences of Christian values in action. The pupil committee regularly discusses church school related issues. It has been involved in the monitoring and evaluation processes, including critiquing the self-evaluation form (SEF) and the appropriate church school related strand of the school development plan. The RE subject leader is very well supported by senior leaders, although to date governors have not yet requested information on standards and progress in RE. All stakeholder views are welcomed and taken seriously. The school strives to listen to parent views and to offer opportunities for discussion on points of clarification and debate. Links with the local church are very strong. Church members regularly visit the school, offering their time and talents. The recently appointed Rector is making a very valuable contribution to worship, both within the school on a fortnightly basis and in the church building itself. She is supported in her ministry by a youth worker, who leads a lunchtime club for interested pupils on a Friday. Links with the Diocese are also very strong. The headteacher has been used by the Diocese as a consultant. She also works in partnership with a local group of church schools, sharing ideas and expertise and providing networking opportunities for herself and the staff. Both governors and staff take up Diocesan training opportunities and these have successfully moved practice on and opened up discussion opportunities back at school.