



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

Penrose Street

Walworth

London SE17 3DT

Previous SIAS grade: Good

Diocese: Southwark

Local authority: Southwark

Date of inspection: 19 January 2015

Date of last inspection: 20 April 2010

School's unique reference number: 100838

Headteacher: Maggie Brady

Inspector's name and number: Nick McKemey 280

School context

St Paul's is a larger than average Primary school with 353 pupils serving the Walworth community in South London. Two-thirds of the pupils are of Black African and Black Caribbean heritage. One third are of White British and other ethnicities. Almost three quarters of the pupils are from Christian families. The remainder are of other faiths or no declared faith. The proportion from disadvantaged backgrounds is in the highest 20 percent nationally. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2014.

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

- Life at St Paul's is infused with an outstanding ethos of Christian family and fellowship, in which, whatever his or her denomination, faith or belief, every individual is valued to the full.
- Collective worship is a highly effective binding and transformational element of the St Paul's community.
- As the result of the outstandingly effective leadership and management of religious education (RE) pupils acquire excellent knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the life and teaching of Jesus.
- The outstanding dedication and commitment of the governors and leadership at St Paul's have consolidated the highly distinctive and effective Christian character of St Paul's School.

Areas to improve

- Formalise the link between the excellent work of the two faith groups and the governing body so that evaluation of the effectiveness of the school's distinctive character is built into its regular business cycle.
- Review and renew the school's core Christian values so they are clearly defined and linked to the well-chosen 'Class Saints'.

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

St Paul's has an outstanding Christian and inclusive ethos of family and fellowship. Pupils feel safe, socially secure and are flourishing in a climate of trust and interdependence. Because of this, regardless his or her denomination, faith or belief, every child is valued to the full and enabled to fulfil their full potential. Parents strongly appreciate the Christian character of the school, 'It's like their second home', commented one. The school's distinctive Christian vision and core values of care, concern, Christianity and courtesy, 'the 4Cs', are owned and articulated by both pupils and staff. The values are broadly stated and their substantial impact is due to more detailed subsequent definition and by the adoption of the 'Class Saints'. Their impact is seen in the high standards of behaviour, positive attitudes to learning and strong academic achievement. Attainment and expected progress are above the norm both nationally and for similar schools. Attendance is above the national average and exclusions are rare. Pupils, including the youngest, are able to make thoughtful moral judgements about behaviour and relationships. This is because of the way the values are illustrated by Biblical stories and parables in collective worship and RE. A cross-curricular Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) framework of activities very effectively underpins the school's Christian ethos. The children learn to be reflective in their learning and behaviour and this enables the pupils to make outstanding progress in spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school gives highly effective attention to the needs of the whole child. Because of highly effective vision, planning and application the RE curriculum makes a salient and deeply significant contribution to the distinctive Christian character of the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Highly effective collective worship is a binding and transformational element in St Paul's School. It generates harmony and spirituality throughout the whole community. Children of all denominations, faiths and no faith, including the very youngest, find collective worship accessible, interesting and enjoyable. The school's vision and values are embedded in the content of worship. An integral part of this provision is the regular use made of the parish church. As a result, the children acquire outstandingly mature knowledge and understanding of the life and teaching of Jesus, the meaning of the Holy Trinity and the key features of the Anglican tradition. The whole school community enjoys worship and the children are absorbed by and knowledgeable about the content. This is because the worship programme is comprehensive, rich in content, varied and thoughtfully planned with strategic vision. Collective worship at St Paul's is a well-judged blend of Church calendar events, spiritual and moral themes, and Bible stories. Pupils make creative, evaluative and extensive contributions to worship, with a strong emphasis on participation and singing.

St Paul's has a strong focus on prayer and reflection. The prayer life of both the school and the individual is outstanding. Prayer is not only a core strand of acts of worship it is also part of the rhythm of school life with, for example, grace said at lunchtime and a prayer said the end of the school day. Children at St Paul's appreciate the positive value of collective prayer for the community. 'It's a happy thing', said a girl in Year 2. They also develop a profound understanding of the purposes of personal prayer. 'This is talking to God personally', commented a boy in Year 6. Parents report that their children discuss the content of worship at home and will often spontaneously pray for those in need or distress.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE is not only an important subject on the curriculum it is a central element of the school's distinctive Christian character. Due to the outstandingly effective leadership and management of RE pupils have excellent knowledge and understanding about and from Christianity and other major world faiths. Through RE they acquire respect and understanding for other's beliefs and opinions. The overall quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. This is due to the quality of the planned curriculum, assessment, pupil monitoring, benchmarking of standards and the quality of the learning environment. Lessons are meticulously planned and packed with a rich variety of learning tasks. Learning in RE is lively and expectations are challenging but realistic. Highly effective and appropriate use is made of digital media to ensure access to learning by all groups. For example, two pupils with significant special needs engaged with learning about miracles through the adept use of film. A

well-orchestrated team of teachers and assistants successfully delivers a sensitively differentiated scheme of work. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and teach to their individual strengths. The result is that the pupils achieve above the national expectations for their age and make excellent progress in units of learning and from year to year. Pupils readily explain the narrative and meaning of Christ's miracles and parables. The emphasis on storytelling and reflection makes RE popular with the children who are highly motivated and enthusiastic about the subject. The RE curriculum is highly effective in developing pupils' theological and moral literacy together with a sound understanding of the Christian faith and the Anglican tradition. RE makes a vital contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. The youngest children clearly understand the moral dimension to decision-making. Because of the emphasis on reflection in their learning the children acquire a mature understanding of and deep interest in spiritual experiences and concepts.

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

The steadfast dedication and commitment of the governing body and leadership at St Paul's have consolidated the highly distinctive and effective Christian character of St Paul's School. The statement, 'We believe that we are all children of God and therefore everyone is of value in the sight of God...' captures the school's vision for the children. The foundation governors effectively challenge and support the leadership to realise this. The vision is strongly held by the school's leadership and shared by staff, pupils and parents. This is translated by means of the core values into an ethos, which underpins the wellbeing of every child and the whole school community. The core values lack precise description. They have been successfully interpreted in more specific Biblically rooted definitions but these have not yet been fully embodied as values. The impact of the supportive ethos of inclusive Christian fellowship on teaching and learning has secured above average overall academic attainment and progress. As a result of highly effective and evaluative leadership and management, collective worship and RE are core strands in the school's distinctive Christian and spiritually reflective character. Two faith groups – one of governors and staff and one of pupils, help underpin and evaluate the school's distinctive character. The former group is not a formal part the governing body and this limits its full effectiveness. The pupils' group is extremely popular and is the result of the extensive attention to the children's voice in the church school. The governors ensure that St Paul's is an outward looking institution with an ethos of service, which thereby has a beneficial impact on the parish and the community of Walworth. The outreach and collaborative work in the community includes productive relationships with church schools, the parish church and other local churches. The part-time secondment of a senior leader to assist another school is a significant commitment to preparing future leadership.

The issues identified in the previous SIAMS inspection focus for development on collective worship and RE have been successfully addressed. These are bound in with the overall developments in the school's Christian distinctiveness and effectiveness.

SIAMS report January 2015 St Paul's C of E Primary School London SE17 3DT