



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### St Paul's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Coronation Street  
Cambridge  
CB2 1HJ

**Diocese: Ely**

Local authority: Cambridgeshire  
Dates of inspection: 18 September 2012  
Date of last inspection: 14 May 2008  
School's unique reference number: 110839  
Headteacher: Mr Stephen Jordan  
Inspector's name and number: Marion Betts 220

#### School context

St Paul's School is a smaller than average primary school for children aged 4 to 11 years. There are 192 pupils on roll. The school serves a socially advantaged area close to the centre of Cambridge and is within walking distance of the parish church. The current religious education subject leader took up her post at the beginning of the school year.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Paul's C of E VA School as a Church of England school are good

Christian values taught through collective worship are at the heart of the school's community life and have a strong positive influence on the behaviour, attitudes and well-being of the pupils. The school's close link with the church is recognised by pupils and parents as a distinctive feature of the school.

#### Established strengths

- The very effective leadership of the headteacher to promote the Christian vision of the school.
- Good relationships within the school community based on mutual respect and care for each other.
- The strong link between school and the church.
- The use of pupils' own ideas and opinions to deepen their Religious Education (RE) thinking.

#### Focus for development

- Monitor RE teaching and learning to ensure the consistency of a high standard across the school
- Review, plan and monitor the opportunities provided across the curriculum to promote pupils' spiritual development
- Involve pupils more in the planning and presentation of their own acts of worship.

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

Pupils are proud of their school describing it as “one big friendly community”. They praise the inclusivity of the school, the opportunities for personal development and the fact that each pupil’s opinions and ideas are listened to and valued. For example in one lesson observed pupils were asked to prioritise value statements and to discuss together the reasons for their choices. The well-being of pupils is enhanced by praise used effectively and the regular celebration of their achievements.

Pupils enthusiastically undertake responsibilities and especially enjoy helping the younger children to settle into school life. Christian values are taught during collective worship and personal, social and health education (PSHE). These are often linked to Bible teaching. Opportunities are not at present planned to promote spiritual development across the wider curriculum. Pupils know the school’s expectations and these values impact well on pupils’ actions and behaviour. The golden rule “treat others the way you would like to be treated” is known well and applied frequently to all aspects of school life. Pupils understand and clearly demonstrate care for others both by their attitudes to each other and by their concern for those less fortunate than themselves, for example by choosing and raising money for charities. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

The school environment encourages pupils’ spiritual development well, one example being by an attractive inter-active display with thought provoking questions and space to record pupils’ responses. The school has areas for quiet thought and reflection.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Collective worship plays a central part in the school’s life and is understood by pupils and staff to be an important time for affirming the school’s values and developing a sense of community. Pupils listen attentively and willingly discuss their ideas. Worship makes a considerable contribution to defining pupils’ attitudes and behaviour by the promotion of Christian values and the follow-up small group discussions of their practical application to their own lives and experiences. In this way, also, worship enhances pupils’ spiritual and moral development.

Worship is enriched through a variety of leaders including teachers, the local incumbent and Christian groups. Collective worship effectively includes a peace greeting, hymn singing, scripture, prayer, story, the use of memorable examples, and reflection. Pupils enjoy worship best when they or other pupils are involved in presenting it. For example, during the worship based on a passage from James’ letter, pupils showed through drama correct and incorrect use of speech and its effect on the listener. Pupils have been involved in evaluating the worship experience. This has led to improvements being made such as the planning for some involvement of pupils in presenting worship.

Worship is linked to the main Christian festivals. These services and others celebrating significant events are held in the church. Parents are invited and attendance is high. The school also takes part in some Sunday services such as the one to welcome the Reception children and their parents into the church school community. These experiences together with the vicar’s weekly leading of the school worship, aids the pupils’ developing knowledge of Anglican traditions.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory**

RE is an important subject in the school, demonstrated by the appointment of an experienced and senior teacher to the leadership of this subject, as well as by the high budget given and extra enrichment activities planned. The new RE leader is accurately assessing the RE strengths and devising improvement plans from her evaluations. The quality of RE teaching and learning is inconsistent across the school. The best lessons seen had a clear RE focus and the task given related well to the lesson’s learning objective and motivated and stimulated pupils’ interest. Pupils enjoy RE when practical, cross-curricular activities are planned; for example, drama of a wedding reinforced well their learning about this Christian liturgy. Pupils’ opinions and their personal responses to the RE topic as evidenced by the

younger children composing a thanksgiving chant, is a strong feature of the current RE programme and contributes well to the pupils' spiritual and moral development.

Monitoring RE is undertaken and assessments of learning made. These are used for future planning but are not yet linked to the national RE attainment levels and pupil progress is not recorded. A good balance is achieved between Christianity and other faiths in planning the curriculum. Enrichment activities to enhance the learning about all faiths are undertaken and stimulate pupils' learning. For example one class have toured the city's churches noticing Christian symbols and another visited the Jewish centre. There are many attractive RE displays around the school.

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

The strong leadership of the headteacher is instrumental in promoting the school's Christian vision and values. The school has recently reviewed its aims after seeking the views of staff, governors, parents and pupils. These are displayed prominently around the school and on the website. This ensures that all stakeholders are aware of the partnership between the church and the school. The distinctiveness of the school being a church school is also reinforced by some whole school work being focused on a Christian related activity. Last year during RE week, balloons were released carrying pupils' prayers, thoughts and hopes for a better world. More recently each class studied a psalm and shared their learning with each other.

Staff are committed to implementing the Christian ethos and feel appreciated by the school leadership for their work. They value the school's culture of encouragement and praise and of their opinions being sought and valued. They are supportive of each other both personally and professionally.

The school leadership is fully aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors are well-informed and the vicar is involved in planning school Christian activities. The governors fully supported the headteacher in the appointment of an experienced leader for developing the spiritual and RE provision in the school.

Parents are welcomed into school and appreciate the approachability of the staff. Links with the church are good. The school uses the church resources. For example, the pupils experienced the Easter reflections provided at the church. The school has good links with the diocese, participates in activities provided and seeks its support when appropriate.