

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Brinnington St Paul's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Brinnington Rise

Stockport

Cheshire

**Diocese: Chester**

Local authority: Stockport

Dates of inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2007

Date of last inspection: 16<sup>th</sup> July 2003

School's unique reference number: 106108

Headteacher: Mrs J Bottomley

Inspector's name and number: Mrs S Bowen 454

#### **School context**

This average-sized school serves an area of high social deprivation. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is twice the national average. The proportion of those with special educational needs is above the national average. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage. The school has a separate Foundation Stage unit on site.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Brinnington St Paul's School as a Church of England school are satisfactory.**

St Paul's School provides a satisfactory education based on broad Christian principles, allied with a high level of commitment to its local community. Pupils are encouraged to care for each other in school, and to think of the needs of others in the world around them.

#### **Established strengths**

- The way the school works in partnership with its local community, by drawing attention to its distinctive needs, campaigning for better provision and attracting funding wherever possible
- The good provision for enhancing the life chances of its pupils.

#### **Focus for development**

- To define the school's Christian mission so that all are clear about its Church of England foundation
- To begin a process of evaluating the quality of the school's Anglican provision and include all stakeholders
- To strengthen the links with the church and establish more frequent contact in order to make the partnership clear and relevant
- To ensure that all documentation reinforces the school's Christian status unambiguously.

#### **Brinnington St Paul's Church of England Primary School is satisfactory in meeting the needs of all learners through its distinctive Christian character.**

Pupils say that they are proud of their school and that their teachers expect them to work hard and to do their best. They feel safe from bullying and know that any incidents are dealt with quickly and fairly. They take responsibility for jobs and decisions around school, knowing that their views are respected. Older pupils look after younger ones with kindness and consideration; playground partners and a "friendship stop" are used effectively to make sure that no-one feels worried or lonely. Many pupils know that it is a Church of England school but not all are able to state clearly what it means to be a Christian or how their school is different from others nearby. They are keen to raise funds to help others with greater needs, but do not have a clear idea that this might be Christianity in action. Some parents choose the school because of its Church of England status, but most choose it because it is local and has a good reputation for caring for its pupils. Provision for the particular needs of these pupils is strategically aimed at redressing the disadvantages encountered by many of them;

there is a particularly high number of support workers including mental health and language workers and a learning mentor. The school does its best to accommodate the needs of a significant minority of Jehovah's Witness pupils who chose to come to it.

**Collective worship has a satisfactory effect on the school community.**

Pupils say they enjoy taking part in collective worship. They come in calmly and sensibly, listen carefully and are keen to contribute ideas that they know will be respected. They are accustomed to making spontaneous prayers, and this is handled very effectively, giving them a good opportunity for spiritual development. They know the Lord's Prayer and the school prayer, and they sing the modern hymns with great enthusiasm. Worship is regarded as important in the life of the school, however at present not all staff attend the daily acts of worship. The vicar, who is relatively new to the parish, leads an act of worship by invitation about once a month, and welcomes the pupils to some services in church celebrating the major festivals of the church year. The distance to the church is one barrier to effective links. Parents enjoy attending the church services and some of the school's acts of worship, but would like more frequent invitations to those acts of worship where their children show their work.

**Leadership and management of the school as a church school are satisfactory.**

The headteacher is strongly committed to the local community in this geographically isolated and challenging area. She takes advantage of every opportunity to attract resources to the school in order to further the life chances of her pupils, and to help to build up a sense of local pride. She leads the daily act of worship effectively, in particular encouraging the pupils' spiritual development through the use of spontaneous prayer. Partnerships between the headteacher, senior staff members and the governors are built on good relationships and mutual respect, and run effectively. However, the headteacher is less clear about how the school's Christian mission should be articulated. The foundation governors are all new to their role, and as yet do not monitor and challenge the school to promote its distinctively Christian ethos, as opposed to its broadly Christian approach. The governors and staff have not yet played an active role in evaluating the school's Christian provision. Reorganisation of subject leadership into curriculum groups means that at present the leadership and monitoring of standards in RE and Collective Worship are not sufficiently defined in terms of roles and expectations. Documentation does not clearly explain the Anglican status to parents and new members of staff.