

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Tower Hill,
Much Hadham,
Hertfordshire
SG10 6DL

Diocese of St Albans

LA: Hertfordshire

SIAS Inspection: December 2006

Previous S23 Inspection: November 2001

URN: 117444

Headteacher: Mrs Judith Sparks

SIAS Inspector Name: Mrs Catherine Large 482

School Context

St. Andrew's is an average-sized village primary school with a current roll of 209 pupils. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is very low. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is well below average. Nearly all pupils come from white British backgrounds. Attainment on entry to the school is above national expectation.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Andrew's as a Church of England school are good

All aspects of the school as a Church of England school are at least good and there are some outstanding features. These include the personal development of pupils and the management's strong commitment to its Christian foundation. Parents are very happy with the progress their children make in their learning and personal development. There are some areas for development in religious education and collective worship.

Established strengths

- Pupils' overall personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- The strong commitment of the headteacher, senior management team, governors and staff to the Christian vision for the school.
- The effective links with local clergy and the Christian community.
- The high quality of reflection and personal response in the best religious education lessons.

Focus for development

- Be clearer about standards and expectations in the new Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus for religious education.
- Identify ways of evaluating collective worship and increasing opportunities for a wider range of pupils' involvement, reflection and response.

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

The school meets the needs of all its learners outstandingly well. Pupils feel valued and cared for and have a very positive attitude to their teachers, their peers, their learning and their whole school experience. The distinctive Christian character is promoted

explicitly through features such as the new SMART aims, school policies and practices and a significant number of displays around the school. Pupils are clear about the Christian nature of the school and speak positively about their links with the church. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is developed extremely well through a range of activities in and beyond the curriculum. This is supported, for example, through the school's link with the Mara Rianda School in the Mara, Kenya. In lessons and in worship, pupils show an above average grasp of world current affairs and respond enthusiastically when given opportunity to question and voice their own ideas. They are confident in the way they express themselves. The foundations of this confidence and skill are laid in their earliest years in school. The School Council is active and effective. The great majority of pupils show high levels of courtesy and a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Parents express great satisfaction with the Christian ethos of the school and the way it is meeting the needs of their children. Inspection confirms this judgement.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship has a central place in the life of the school and pupils value the opportunity it provides for them to meet as a community. There is planned programme of worship with themes reflecting the main occasions in the Church year and themes suggested by the Diocese. Through worship, pupils become familiar with Christian teaching and practice. Overall, it has a good impact on their spiritual development although opportunities for quiet personal reflection and response were not strong features of the worship observed. The local rector makes regular contributions and pupils respond well to opportunities for involvement when he leads worship. The impact of worship in the church is good and pupils and parents value and feel benefit from this experience at festival times and at the Leavers' service. Pupils sing very well and are familiar with key Christian prayers. 'Sharing' assemblies are a strong feature of the provision and provide a good context for praising the achievement of pupils. Parents value the opportunity this provides for participation. The School Council did recommend a change to the pattern of worship and this has been adopted by the school. However, currently there is little structured means of receiving feedback from pupils and staff about the impact of worship. Present provision is good but lacks some variety in the range of leaders of worship and the involvement of pupils, for example, from the musical groups in school.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The overall quality of teaching and learning in religious education is good. In the best lessons, teachers stimulate the curiosity and interest of pupils through the use of visual stimuli, modelling, discussion and drama. Pupils are given many good opportunities to reflect on the meaning of their learning so that even the youngest pupils can talk about the way characters in the nativity story might be feeling. Older pupils analyse and respond to different images of the annunciation. These activities develop well the important thinking skills in the subject. All teachers use the Interactive Whiteboards effectively. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity is above average and reflects a good understanding of the aims of the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus and Diocesan requirements. Overall, their knowledge and understanding of other faiths is average. They have insufficient opportunities to meet members, or visit the places of worship, of faiths other than Christianity. The subject is well resourced and there is an increasing use of information communication technology to extend pupils' knowledge. At present the school has not made full use of the standards expressed in the level descriptors of the Agreed Syllabus. In many classes, pupils display high levels of skill in oral work, but this is not reflected in the tasks set for the written work of pupils of different abilities across the school.

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

The leadership and management of the school as a church school are outstanding. The headteacher has been in post for little over a year. Under her leadership, and with the support of the deputy headteacher as well as the governing body, the school has evaluated its role and vision as a church school. The total commitment to the Christian ethos of the school is evident in the new logo, many displays, the school's documentation and in the way the school is led and managed on a day to day basis. Relationships with the local church are very good with a two way flow of support and information. Foundation governors are very enthusiastic and supportive. There is little involvement of the church in religious education lessons and this is a missed opportunity. Links with the broader community are good. The 'Friends of St. Andrews' give superb financial support which benefits the teaching and learning in the classroom. Pupils participate in local events and groups of pupils visit centres for the elderly. Parents and pupils are consulted regularly and express high levels of satisfaction. The school's Three Year Plan for Improvement identifies appropriate targets for religious education and collective worship. However, currently, there is no structured way by which Foundation governors monitor the development of the Christian ethos.

SIAS report December 2006: St Andrew's VA C of E Primary School SG10 6DL