

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Paul's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Warrington Road,
Goose Green,
Wigan,
Lancashire
WN3 6SB

Diocese: Liverpool

Local authority: Wigan MB
Dates of inspection: 26th March 2007
Date of last inspection: 20th – 23rd January 2003
School's unique reference number: 106453
Headteacher: Mrs Alison Jackson
Inspector's name and number: Graham H Nuttall 456

School context

St. Paul's is an averaged sized primary school with pupils coming from a variety of social backgrounds. The vast majority of pupils are of white British heritage although a small number of children are of mixed heritage. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is average. The number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average and none have a statement of special educational need. The school gained the Healthy School award in February 2007. The headteacher has been in post for fifteen months.

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

St. Paul's is a good school with some outstanding features. It successfully fulfils its Mission statement "Learning and Living through Jesus Christ." Challenging and creative teaching, within a caring, supportive, Christian environment helps pupils to feel secure so they can develop in mind, body and spirit. Collective worship impacts positively on pupils' personal development. The school community promotes a strong sense of responsibility coupled with a vitality and enthusiasm for learning and moving forwards.

Established strengths

- A clear Christian vision successfully helps to build on the firm foundations and aspirations set by governors, Headteacher and incumbent.
- Outstanding acts of collective worship impact positively on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- An inclusive Christian ethos which values the contribution of each individual and enables children to grow in confidence and self-esteem.
- Very strong links with the parish church and the wider community.

Focus for development

- Establish strategies to monitor and to evaluate the provision for Religious Education.
- Purchase additional resources and artefacts for use within the teaching of RE.

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

The school's Christian family atmosphere is central to its ethos. Children are polite and confident and their behaviour is excellent. Relationships within the school are of a very high order and are characterised by Christian concern and care for all pupils both within classrooms and at play. Well planned provision enables pupils' personal, social, moral and spiritual development to be very good. Pupils have a strong appreciation of right and wrong,

they willingly help each other and readily applaud the efforts of others. The level of pastoral care offered is a strength of the school. Children feel safe and values of respect and tolerance stem from a positive learning environment. The school demonstrates a strong commitment to inclusion. All pupils at St. Paul's feel valued and as a result they flourish. A parent described the school as "a place where we know our children will assuredly receive Christian education," whilst a governor said, "the school and church work closely together to form the bedrock of our community." The vicar plays a prominent role in supporting the school and sees this as an important and integral part of his ministry. He knows most pupils individually and as a result the parish supports a flourishing Sunday School and a Young Persons Group. The developing School Council ensures pupils have good opportunities to play a significant role in decision making, for example in the design and construction of a coloured window pane which pupils felt would give them a visual focus during periods of reflection in worship. Pupils talk with pride about their school, they develop a sense of stewardship and they understand the importance of serving others less fortunate than themselves through fundraising for a wide range of charities. Some Christian charities are well supported, for example, "Operation Shoebox". The parish and school have also developed exceptionally strong links with a school in Palestine and some considerable efforts are made to support this ravaged community. This gives pupils an excellent opportunity to understand world problems and to develop their cultural awareness.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The Headteacher, foundation governors and vicar speak with tremendous enthusiasm and sincerity about the importance of worship in the life of the school which is firmly embedded upon Christian principles and Anglican tradition. Collective worship has an outstanding effect on pupils' spiritual and moral development because of good planning and a rich and varied content. Assemblies are conducted in a way that creates in children an excitement for worship and skilful delivery ensures that pupils are actively engaged and totally enthralled. They display enthusiasm, reverence and enjoyment and are confident to participate in worship by reading their own prayers. The vicar's weekly visits to lead worship are eagerly awaited by the children, "We learn lots from him and realise how important it is to be a Christian." Worship themes often link to the Christian year, but they are also broad enough in scope to allow for flexibility and spontaneity. The excellent standard of musicianship of both the school choir and recorder group enhances the worship ethos and demonstrates a high level of commitment from both pupils and staff. A Y6 child commented, "we enjoy the singing and it's a time when we can talk to God." Children take part in church services celebrating major festivals and parental support on these occasions is exceptional. Parents and governors upholding the belief in the relevance of family life enthusiastically support the weekly family worship help in school. A well-written book of prayers produced by pupils covers a wide range of topics and clearly illustrates the depth of faith held by many children.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Pupils have a good knowledge of Christianity and satisfactory knowledge of other world faiths because of highly effective teaching. They recognise the need for respect and tolerance towards each other and other faith communities. RE lessons make effective use of a range of teaching styles with good emphasis placed on the use of drama and discussion. These two aspects make the subject "come alive". Pupils in KS1 eagerly acted out the events of Palm Sunday whilst a group of Y6 pupils effectively used information technology to produce copies of "The Jerusalem Times" reporting the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus. Children are adept at articulating their own thoughts and ideas and are keen to listen to the opinions of others. Teachers demand independent thinking through well-planned lessons and skilful questioning and pupils achieve good standards in their written work, particularly the more able children. The co-ordinator is developing her role well, and she is aware that the subject would be enhanced by the provision of additional resources and artefacts. Assessment arrangements are currently informal and there are no formal strategies to monitor and evaluate the quality of RE.

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

Christian leadership by the headteacher, her staff and foundation governors is good. This factor impacts significantly on the success of the school as a church school and provides pupils with opportunities to grow and develop within a very effective, caring and Christian ethos. The Headteacher has been in post for fifteen months and because of the dedication, commitment and enthusiasm of both staff and governing body, is in a very strong position to develop and enrich the school even further. The prospectus states that the school seeks to provide challenging and creative teaching situations within a Christian context, and this it certainly succeeds in achieving. There is a real sense of “togetherness” in the school community and whilst a lack of space in some classrooms causes logistical problems, pupils are offered a vibrant environment within which to work and play. The Senior Management Team and foundation governors used the self-evaluation materials successfully and their judgements are fully supported by the inspector. Many parents recognise that St. Paul’s has a distinctive Christian quality, and whilst not all attend church weekly, they are keen to support and encourage the Christian ethos because of the positive effect on their children’s personal development. The school successfully promotes an understanding of the meaning and significance of the Christian faith and values through the experiences it offers to pupils. Governors have addressed all issues raised in the previous denominations inspection report.

SIAS Report March 2007. St Paul’s Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Warrington Road, Goose Green, Wigan WN3 6SB