



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

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

Westminster Road,
Salisbury, Wiltshire
SP2 7DG

Diocese: Salisbury

Local authority: Wiltshire

Date of inspection: 19th March 2014

Date of last inspection: 16th June 2009

School's unique reference number: 126411

Headteacher: (Acting) Mrs Lizzie Weavers

Inspector's name and number: Carole McCormack (224)

School context

The school is situated on the outskirts of Salisbury and draws its children mainly from the local area. It is popular and regularly oversubscribed. 7% of the pupils on roll have English as another language; and the number of different home languages is 11. The school has a 6-place Hearing Impaired unit; and the number of children with special educational needs or disabilities is 12%. 5% of the children are entitled to free school meals. A significant point for this inspection was that the new Headteacher, appointed in September 2013 suddenly left for personal reasons on 14th March. The very experienced deputy stepped immediately into the role of acting Headteacher and, having consulted her staff, was perfectly happy to let the inspection take place.

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

- The vibrant Christian vision at the heart of the school is deeply held, shared and promoted by the acting Headteacher, her senior leaders, all staff and governors. This enhances all aspects of provision
- This shared vision brings about exemplary teamwork which ensures unbroken continuity of provision for the children in the face of sudden unforeseen events and circumstances
- The very strong relationship between the school and St Paul's church deepens the quality of spiritual provision and theological understanding in the school
- The clear focus on each individual learner ensures that each child is nurtured and supported to achieve to the best of their ability

Areas to improve

- To introduce opportunities for individual progression in spirituality as well as high quality provision and promotion
- To provide structured opportunities for each learner to evaluate the impact of

collective worship on their own lives

- To build on the already strong assessment systems in RE (held within learners' books) to demonstrate a shared understanding of progress over time; and learners' achievement compared with other core subjects.

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

The clear Christian vision of the longstanding Headteacher – in post for many years before the last Headteacher – is still deeply present in the school. The acting head explained that 'she saw something special in everyone' and 'grew this'. All current staff were appointed by this previous Headteacher and have 'caught' her powerful vision, centred upon the Christian values of Love, Forgiveness, Truthfulness and Perseverance. Consequently all learners are cherished and supported in achieving highly. One parent commented upon the outstanding 'individual support which aids achievement.' The personal development and wellbeing of the children is paramount. One child explained that her teacher 'listens, helps with my worries and calms me down'. The learners in the Hearing Impaired unit benefit from a positive and inspiring atmosphere where anything is possible; and these children are thoughtfully integrated into the mainstream classes with appropriately differentiated materials. The provision and promotion of the Spiritual Moral Social and Cultural (SMSC) development of the children is rich and diverse; but learners need to have the opportunity to progress spiritually. One Syrian parent explained how the school had supported the situation in his home country by holding a non-uniform day for Syria; and had given his children the opportunity to be interviewed by other children concerning their Islamic faith. The parent explained that, consequently, the family 'feel valued here'. The children are offered a rich, engaging and stimulating provision within a strongly Christian context. They bring a clear understanding of Christian values to their encounter with a range of visitors, visits, charitable events, extra-curricular activities and opportunities for quiet reflection. Relationships in this school are very strong indeed. Parents feel that 'the culture of the school is so strong that a parent forum is not necessary'; and all praised the 'openness, transparency and love' shown by staff. The behaviour of the children and the respect which they show to adults is exemplary. The relationship between Sarum St Paul's and their partner school in India is deep and meaningful, involving staff exchange and teaching within each other's schools; and diversity has recently been enriched even further by a teacher who has taught in Africa joining the staff. These first hand experiences enable the children to see for themselves that Christianity is a multi-cultural world faith. The key values at the heart of the school are brought by the children to their encounters with culturally diverse communities. Children love RE and benefit from focussed opportunities to explore the meaning of the Christian values which lie at the heart of the success of their school. These values of Love, Forgiveness, Truthfulness and Perseverance strengthen their understanding and openness of diverse faiths and cultures.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is a highly valued time of learning and reflection for all members of the school community. Children are engaged and inspired by the quality and appropriate 'pitch' of worship explaining that they have a 'great time'. The stories of Jesus which they hear 'influence' their 'life'. They are absolutely clear that 'school values are linked to Christian values' and love the energy and teaching offered by members of St Paul's church in worship. Because worship is focussed appropriately upon the age and experience of the children, they are engaged and inspired. The collective worship themes deeply influence the thoughts and actions of the children. The impact of the theme of friendship on one child was that 'I must always be there if people are upset'. Another was deeply affected by the theme of forgiveness: 'I stopped saying that I can't accept someone's apology'. All the children interviewed showed evidence that their lives had been affected by worship. The current system for evaluating worship is quite objective and in the form of evaluation sheets or questionnaires. Currently the reflective habits

of learners are limited through lack of opportunity to engage in regular written reflection on the impact of worship on their own lives and actions. Parents comment that their children 'know what they are learning in worship and talk about the Christian values' they have been considering. Opportunity for the growth of personal spirituality is provided in worship. Adults and children sing with conviction, respond sensitively and engage with the liturgical sentences which frame the act of worship. Children are invited to pray spontaneously as well as to write their prayers on a prayer tree which stands next to the worship table. The relatively new reflection area, sited just outside the hall, gives the opportunity to children and adults to sit and reflect in a tranquil area, set physically apart from the main environment of the school. A display of the practical application of the school's key Christian values forms part of this reflection area. Because of the excellent relationship between the school and the church and through the input of 'the Bridge', Bible knowledge is very strong indeed and a theological understanding appropriate to primary age children is being built up. A good example of this is the comment of one Y6 child, reflecting upon the emotions that Jesus may have felt on Palm Sunday: 'If He knew what was going to happen He would have been scared; if He didn't He would have been nervous.' Collective Worship is well planned and reflects the suggestions of members of the school community – especially the children – concerning areas of improvement and development. Worship planning incorporates elements of the 'Values for Life' scheme and a focus on Christian festivals. There is a wide range of Collective Worship leaders: members of the church, the acting Headteacher and staff, and visitors representing charities and various sectors of the community. This variety means that worship is relevant and meaningful to all members of the school community.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious Education is a real strength at Sarum St Paul's. It is led by an outstanding practitioner who demonstrated a truly transformational learning opportunity for her children during the inspection. The all-pervasive Christian values lived out in the relationships within the school and in the school's approach to learning; the passion of all staff to enable their children to achieve of their best; and outstanding subject leadership all contribute to this strength. As a result of all this, learners' achievement in RE is high. However, the tracking systems, enabling staff, subject leader, senior leadership and governors to clearly monitor the progress of all children over time are not yet in place. This means also that learners' achievement in RE cannot clearly be compared with achievement in the other core subjects. Assessment has been well developed and the progress of the children in RE is demonstrated by the work in their RE books. This now needs to be taken further in order to reflect whether a child is 'on target' to achieve end of key stage expectations, or is exceeding or falling short of those expectations. Teaching is either good or outstanding in the school and children are inspired by the use of high quality resources, carefully chosen artefacts and appropriate use of IT. Differentiation is skilful and all children can fully engage with the learning because of this. The RE leader is a subject specialist and she has confidently and effectively taken forward the Wiltshire agreed syllabus in the school. The support which she gives to her colleagues, together with the subject 'team' approach, ensures the high quality of the curriculum. It is creative and carries real impact. At the end of an observed Y6 RE lesson a short animation on the crucifixion was used as a meditation. The response of the children was transformed into a deep realisation of the extent of Christ's sacrifice for the sins of humankind.

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

There is an unusually strong and cohesive Christian vision in Sarum St Paul's that has a real impact upon all aspects of provision because it is shared by staff, senior school leadership and governors. The Christian values underpinning this vision directly influence the high achievement in the school because Christian love for the individual is paramount; learning is guided by the principles of forgiveness and truthfulness; and perseverance to achieve of one's

best is warmly promoted. The power of this Christian vision was vividly apparent in the attitudes demonstrated by all stakeholder groups in connection with the recent departure of the last Headteacher. The presence of the governors in school is deeply appreciated by parents, staff and children and they monitor and evaluate each aspect of Christian distinctiveness and effectiveness in a range of subtle, direct (as members of subject teams and during formal monitoring visits) and indirect ways. Monitoring of collective worship and of teaching and learning in all subjects feeds into overall evaluation of provision and influences strategic planning. The readiness of the deputy Headteacher to step without hesitation into the role of acting Headteacher; the numerous votes of confidence in her ability to excel in the post; the openness of the governors in addressing this subject; and the accepting and supportive attitude of the parents are powerful points of evidence as to how well the school has prepared for a continuity of highly effective Christian leadership. Partnerships with the local church, the parents and with the wider community are exemplary; and work has been undertaken with the diocese on aspects of church school provision. The arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements. Seldom does a school so perfectly embody its Christian mission: 'Sarum St Paul's is a happy and caring school where all individuals are valued, nurtured and supported. Within our school community we seek to understand and live out Christian values within a context of mutual respect and the care of one another as expressed in our school's mission statement.'

SIAMS report March 2014 Sarum St Paul's CE VA Primary School SP2 7DG