

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### St. Paul's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School

Paul Street, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA4 5LA

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Bath and Wells</b>
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Somerset
Date of inspection	23 May 2017
Date of last inspection	23 May 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled Junior 123783
Headteacher	Christopher Partridge
Inspector's name and number	Jean Welch 878

#### School context

St. Paul's Church of England Junior is a larger than average sized school with 303 children on roll, organised into 12 classes. It is located in the centre of Shepton Mallet and receives children from two infant schools in the town. Many of the children come from challenging socio-economic backgrounds. The proportion of children for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is above the national average. The number of children with special educational needs or disability (SEND) and English as an additional language (EAL) is approximately average. The majority of pupils with SEND have social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

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

- The headteacher's inspirational Christian leadership, strongly supported by the governors and leadership team, impacts positively on the clear strategic direction of this church school's inclusive, encouraging and caring community.
- The dedicated hard working staff, who value each child as unique in the eyes of God, inspire pupils to be the best that they can be.
- The strong partnership between the school and the local churches has a very positive effect on the spiritual development and wellbeing of the whole school community.
- Explicitly articulated and deeply embedded Christian values underpin everything the school does and have a significant impact on the daily lives and achievements of all pupils.

#### Areas to improve

- Develop more opportunities for the pupils to deepen their own spirituality through high quality experiences in worship and reflective prayer.
- Ensure that the governors' monitoring includes sufficient depth of evidence of the impact of the school's distinctive Christian character, so that they can challenge the impact of the school's vision in all areas of school life.

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

St. Paul's really understands the way in which its work is rooted in Christian values and how these underpin every aspect of school life. Seven core Christian values of respect, equality, friendship, love, encouragement, compassion and trust are at the heart of the school. The initial letter of each value forms an acrostic making the word reflect. The magnificent school grounds are used to provide reflective areas including a large labyrinth walk, which allows the children time and space to think or pray about matters that concern them. Through self-evaluation the school has recognised the importance of enhancing the spiritual development of the pupils by giving them more opportunities to reflect on the Christian values. For example, after reflecting on the value of equality (Galatians 26.29) and treating everyone equally and fairly, the school decided to work towards becoming a UNICEF rights respecting school. The children have voted for rights respecting ambassadors in every class. These ambassadors ensure the five chosen rights are in place, including the right to be treated equally and the right to be heard with views respected. Pupil voice is extremely important to the school. There are collective worship ambassadors, anti-bullying coordinators, house captains and a school council. All of these meet with staff who listen to their views and ideas on how to make the school a better place. The children therefore feel listened to, confident and safe in expressing their ideas, knowing that they will be respected and taken seriously. The impact on the spiritual, moral, social, cultural (SMSC) development of children, of all faiths or none, is a major strength of the school.

The school's mission statement as defined by the 'reflect' values is 'Promoting, valuing and celebrating achievement in a Christian setting'. The pupils' efforts are acknowledged and celebrated all the time and shared with parents. For example, through stickers or certificates, electronic dojo points and ready to worship tokens. As a result, the pupils really want to be in school. Based on the values of love and encouragement, in particular, leaders work hard with parents and pupils to raise attendance and success in this is celebrated. The school is highly effective in using information to track pupils' progress in learning and puts strategies in place to ensure all children, especially those with SEND or EAL, achieve challenging targets. Careful planning and creative learning programmes are in place to support each child's needs, particularly those with pupil premium funding. The school's actions to improve pupils' chances, strongly linked to the Christian value of equality, ensure each child is known, valued and inspired to succeed as a unique child of God. The school has a family community feel which enables parents to be proactively engaged with the school even if problems at home make this difficult. Relationships between the staff and pupils, based on trust, are strong and pupils care well for each other. The care often goes beyond the school gates and reaches out to those less fortunate than themselves, showing compassion to others through raising money for local, national and global charities. Two Local Authority Parent and Family Advisors, lined managed by the headteacher, are based at the school enabling the families and children who are struggling to get the early help required. This demonstrates the school's commitment to finding ways to help those in need. The teaching of religious education (RE) is central to the school's ethos and is at the heart of the curriculum. Visits from an Imam to help 'demystify' Islam is just one example of the wide experience of diversity provided by the RE curriculum. Pupils really enjoy the challenges in RE lessons which help them think about the big questions in life. One child said that he had really thought about creation and science in an RE lesson and this had helped him think about what he really believed.

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

The impact of collective worship is outstanding because it develops in children an excellent understanding of the relationship between the Bible messages they hear and how the values, based on biblical principles and the teaching of Jesus, have meaning for them today. Acts of worship are thoroughly planned around the core values and closely linked to Bible stories. Planning leading and evaluating worship is enriched by support from the local vicar and church children's worker. Leaders from a range of church traditions, Salvation Army, Baptists and Methodists, make worship memorable and consistently capture pupils' interest. Each term focuses on exploring one Christian value in greater depth. This allows time to consider British values and the 'rights of the child' statements alongside that term's value. Music and song are clearly valued ways of expressing praise and thankfulness. The children are very proud to regularly go and sing at a local care home to 'cheer them up'. Learning from the examples they see, each class plans and leads a collective worship time three times a year. Consequently, the children are confident in planning and leading acts of worship by the time they reach Year 6. Parents are always welcome to school collective worship and church services. They speak of how these times are inspirational and their 'joy' in seeing their children take part in worship. They feel included in the worship and feed back to the staff how important they feel these times are. The church is regularly used by the school to celebrate main Christian festivals during the year. Through these services, supported by parents, pupils become familiar with some Anglican traditions. Pupils speak of worship with enthusiasm and value taking part in church services. Collective worship is thoroughly monitored in a process that involves children as well as adults, including informal and formal feedback to the collective worship coordinator. The feedback is used to develop and improve the collective worship times and to enhance the children's learning, particularly with the topics they find difficult to understand. The children are keen to use classrooms reflection

areas, where a cross, a Bible and a painting of the Trinity are beginning to stimulate their thoughts and prayers. The children are very clear about the Christian values and how important they are in their lives. They are beginning to know where each value is mentioned in the Bible. They talk confidently about the person of Jesus and of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. One child wrote, 'Holy Spirit, Father and Son is God, it describes the relationship between these three persons which are all part of one God'. Prayer is very important to the school and children actively participate in personal prayer and reflection through writing prayers and placing them in a 'prayer well' situated in the hall. The collective worship ambassadors monitor the prayer contributions to allow a wide range of prayers to be used during daily acts of worship. The children have a clear understanding of Jesus as the centre of the Christian faith. The Lord's prayer and the school prayer are regularly used in worship times. In collective worship on the day of the inspection, reflection time was given to the children and staff to pray for all those affected by the Manchester bombing the night before. This clearly shows the school is not afraid to tackle the difficult issues that face our world with prayer and compassion.

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

The leadership and management team is committed to the ongoing development of the school and has achieved significant progress since the last inspection. All development areas from the previous inspection have been fully addressed. The school's Christian mission statement is explicit in all documents. The school development plan highlights the chosen 'reflect' values in a colour coded format to ensure that everyone understands that they have a central place in the life of the school. There are systems in place which accurately identify future areas for development. One of these is, 'children should have an in depth understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith'. Governors are beginning to be aware that they need to continually update monitoring and evaluating procedures in greater depth. Barriers to children's learning are identified and support is put in place as appropriate. Pupil premium funding is used creatively to support the more vulnerable members of the school. The leadership team is committed to and enthusiastic about raising standards in achievement and progress, clearly linking them to the Christian value of encouragement. Wise decisions have been made to employ and train teaching assistants who have significantly helped raise the standards of all pupils, particularly those with SEND. Leaders are highly effective because the 'reflect' Christian values are consistently used to inform strategic planning. Consequently, all the staff have clear expectations, for example, in leading collective worship. RE teaching is linked to the SMSC development of every learner and the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met. The RE coordinator, ably assisted by her replacement, whilst she is on maternity leave, ensures RE is extremely well led, planned and taught. Support and advice from the diocese has been invaluable in providing high quality professional development and succession planning, resulting in the school maintaining an up to date understanding of local and national initiatives. The headteacher mentors other church school headteachers and is passionate about developing middle leaders in future school leadership. This results in leaders who are valued and supported to contribute to the school and develop their careers. School/church links are exemplary, resulting in the provision of excellent opportunities for interaction between them and the wider community. Parents and carers feel valued and appreciate the efforts made to keep them informed in a variety of ways, including twitter. The school is committed to working with its neighbouring infant schools, developing greater respect and friendship between them and thus delivering a positive transition experience for Year 2 children. Parents appreciate the dedicated work of the staff in supporting their children's personal and spiritual development as well as their academic success. The leadership and management team is well placed to take the school forward and face the challenges of the future.

SIAMS report May 2017 St. Paul's Church of England VC Junior School, Shepton Mallet, BA4 5LA