

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Paul's Church of England Primary School

St Paul's Road, Brentford, TW8 0PN

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| Current SIAMS inspection grade | Outstanding |
| Diocese | London |
| Previous SIAMS inspection grade | Good |
| Local authority | Hounslow |
| Date of inspection | 7 November 2017 |
| Date of last inspection | November 2012 |
| Type of school and unique reference number | Voluntary Aided 102524 |
| Headteacher | John Wright |
| Inspector's name and number | John Logan 892 |

School context

St Paul's is a split site two-form entry voluntary aided primary school in the parish of St Paul's, Brentford. The school is expanding with 359 children on role including a morning nursery. The headteacher has been in place since September 2013. The deprivation indicator is significantly above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language, minority ethnic groups, free school meals and those with special educational needs. The school had a major fire in 2013 destroying 80% of the premises. It has been through a major rebuilding project. The parish is currently in a period of interregnum.

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

- St Paul's has strong Christian values that are clearly expressed through a belief in the importance of each member of the school community.
- Leaders have a strong and ambitious vision for the school and this is driven by their distinctive Christian identity.
- The school fosters positive relationships with all groups and this has a direct impact on areas such as achievement, attendance and behaviour.
- Collective worship is a key focal point for the school community, drawing on biblical themes to relate to children's own experiences.
- The strong leadership and vision of the governors and the clergy have provided Christian vision and stability in a difficult period of transition for the school.

Areas to improve

- Provide further opportunities to increase children's understanding of prayer through experiences outside formal collective worship.
- Develop further the understanding of diversity within the Christian faith so that children gain a more comprehensive understanding of the multi-cultural nature of the faith.
- Ensure that all teaching in RE is either good or outstanding in order that there is consistency across the whole school.

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

Distinctive Christian values are at the heart of each aspect of the school and provide a framework for all that they do, from the approach to family service at lunchtimes to curriculum design and development. This is driven from their mission statement 'Caring for all...growing with God'. Each child and adult in the community is valued as an individual, with great emphasis on recognising and developing the gifts of all. As one parent said 'the school has a vision of the whole child' with another adding that the school is 'not like a community, more like a family'. This strong 'family' sense has been continued despite significant challenges of a major fire and school expansion. Parents and other stakeholders speak passionately about how the school 'goes the extra mile' to ensure their children are given the best possible care. One parent described the support she received when her child was seriously ill as 'beyond incredible'. This high level of attention to meet the needs of each child and family translates into good and improving attainment. Overall attainment is close to and frequently exceeds national averages, with care taken to ensure that the differing needs of all children are met. A particular strength of the school is the way it supports the educational achievement of low-attainers and other groups, including ethnic minority and disadvantaged groups. Attendance rates are high, and the school attributes this to their distinctive Christian character enabling them to provide a school experience which is in their words 'vibrant, lively and engaging so children want to come to school'. There are a wide variety of experiences available to support spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC), including key opportunities for children to experience more of their local community, through visits and visitors. This results in a rich educational experience for the children. The school caters well for all children, regardless of their background or faith, as one parent described it, 'it is a Christian school for everyone'. Another parent spoke of the care the school gave when settling a refugee family. Children find religious education (RE) challenging and stimulating and it makes a significant contribution to the Christian character of the school. The strong Christian values promoted by the school are developed further in RE. For example, in a lesson on peace and reconciliation a child with specific learning needs spoke of peace like 'a sea floating in the breeze'. Children have a strong understanding of respect for the diversity of differing beliefs, but their understanding of Christianity as a world religion is limited.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is a key focal point for the school. It is carefully planned and delivered by led by a range of leaders from inside the school, clergy and others, including children themselves. This ensures that worship opportunities are rich and diverse. The school week is framed around a variety of worship experiences and a particular focus is the weekly collective worship in church. Children and adults value these times and speak of how it relates to their everyday lives. Worship engages and inspires children and encourages them to apply understanding to their own lives. It is inclusive and provides opportunities for children to engage with biblical material and Christian teaching in a meaningful way. Liturgy and prayer is used effectively in worship, including the use of responsive prayers, the Lord's prayer and children's own prayers. All have roles to play throughout their time in the school, for example Year 4 children always light the candles at the Thursday act of worship. Children particularly enjoy these regular opportunities for worship in the church. Prayer forms a part of every act of worship, with opportunities for prayer and reflection regularly provided. It is often personalised and very particular needs in the school community are often prayed for. Opportunities to develop prayer outside formal collective worship are limited. Collective worship enables children to have a strong understanding of the significance of Jesus and the Christian belief God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, or as one child described it as reminding us that 'God is everywhere and is always with us'. Stories from the Bible are central to collective worship and are used well to reflect the anglican year and children are able to make connections with their own experience. Children are given wider opportunities to experience worship through visits to St Faith's, their sister church, sharing worship with another local church school, as well as attending St Paul's Cathedral for a service of thanksgiving during St Paul's week. Clear monitoring and evaluation of collective worship results in high quality, tailored experiences for the children and enables clear, systematic planning.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Standards of attainment in RE are broadly in line with other curriculum areas and most children achieve well compared to other core subjects. Attainment in RE is good or better where the teaching is also good or better. There is good evidence that progress in RE is carefully monitored and tracked. Learners make good progress from their varied starting points. The quality of teaching and learning is varied, with a large majority of teaching outstanding or good, but with a small number of lessons less than good. Where teaching is good or outstanding, teachers demonstrate a strong understanding of their subject and subsequently produce high quality lessons which challenge and stimulate learning. In these lessons, activities are designed to meet the differing needs of all children and include multi-sensory learning opportunities. This could be seen, for example, in a lesson on pilgrimage children

were learning about the distinction between ‘special’ and ‘sacred’ with a lower ability group, skilfully supported by a teaching assistant, unpacking the contents of two rucksacks to decide what type of journey was being made. In the few cases where teaching is not good, children’s misconceptions were not addressed or corrected. The quality of questioning skills is very high in many classes, such as a lesson exploring the meaning of the beatitudes, key ideas taught led to thoughtful responses about being ‘blessed’. Examples of children’s responses include ‘you might be having a tough time in hospital and you might think God isn’t with you, but he will comfort you’. The school is using and adapting the diocesan syllabus to meet their own needs, which results in a varied and balanced curriculum for the children. Children are systematically given a breadth of curriculum experiences in Christianity and other major world faiths. They are able to talk about aspects of learning in RE. In most cases they are able to use a wide range of skills, such as enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection effectively to consider important questions of meaning and faith. Whilst assessment in RE is strong, the school are in the process of developing this further in the light of changed assessment practices nationally. The experienced RE subject leader has a very strong level of subject expertise and has a clear vision for how the subject should be developed and this ensures that standards and expectations in RE remain high.

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

Leaders have a clear vision of what gives the school its distinctive Christian character and what needs to be done to develop this further. Governors play an intrinsic role in holding the school to account through their active involvement and good understanding of strengths and areas to develop. They effectively support the headteacher and senior leadership team in articulating an explicit Christian vision which ensures that standards of achievement remain high. There is a strong emphasis on designing and implementing a ‘vibrant curriculum’ that promote high standards of achievement through careful monitoring and evaluation. Leaders ensure that all members of the community are valued as individuals and as a result of this they are able to meet the differing needs of children and provide strong support for all sections of the school community. This strong support ensures that the school provides a coherent and effective approach to well-being, ‘a rounded approach’ as one parent described it.

The strong Christian leadership and vision of the headteacher, the senior leadership team and the RE leader enable the best possible outcomes for children. Arrangements for religious education and collective worship meet statutory requirements. Parents, clergy and members of the local community are fully involved in the life of the school and this brings mutual benefits for all. Parents speak highly of the school as a church school, particularly the openness and approachability of the headteacher and how efficient the school is at dealing with problems when they arise.

The school has strong partnerships with other church schools and with the diocese. The headteacher and staff have been used to support other church schools and leaders at St Paul’s speak of the mutual support gained from this work. The school’s advisor describes some of the links as ‘remarkable and innovative’. Examples of this include bringing Year 6 pupils from a local church school for booster lessons and the establishment of a worship and RE link with a recently opened free school. Through these different activities and through involvement in diocesan leadership training, the school effectively prepares its staff for future leadership of church schools.

SIAMS report November 2017 St Paul’s Church of England Primary School , St Paul’s Road, Brentford, TW8 0PN