



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### Alverthorpe St Paul's Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior and Infant School

St Paul's Drive  
Alverthorpe  
Wakefield  
WF2 0BT

#### Diocese: Wakefield

Local authority: Wakefield  
Dates of inspection: 21<sup>st</sup> November 2008  
Date of last inspection: February 2006  
School's unique reference number: 108253  
Headteacher: Mrs C Chell  
Inspector's name and number: Mr R D Masterton 483

#### School context

St Paul's School has 253 pupils and serves mixed residential districts near the city of Wakefield. Only a very small proportion of the children are not white British and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is low. 16% of pupils are on the special needs register. The parish church is adjacent to the school.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Alverthorpe St Pauls VA Junior and Infant School as a Church of England school are good

The school provides a distinctive and inclusive education for children that is of good quality. Children make good progress stimulated by a rich curriculum. Nurtured in the very strong Christian ethos of the school, children's personal and spiritual development is outstanding. In the period since the last inspection, managers and governors have made good progress strengthening monitoring and considerably improving the teaching of religious education. With further work to securely assess standards in religious education, grow children's creative participation in collective worship and extend the work of foundation governors in monitoring and evaluation, the school has the potential to become outstanding.

#### Established strengths

- The outstanding personal and spiritual development of the children whose behaviour is excellent; they are thoughtful and willing learners and grow into responsible mature young people.
- The inspired leadership of the head teacher and the commitment of all staff to the Christian mission of the school.
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#### Focus for development

- Develop the rôle of children in review, planning, design and creative contribution in school collective worship.
- Establish systems for measuring standards in religious education and monitoring children's progress.
- Strengthen the work of foundation governors in the formal review of collective worship, religious education and school effectiveness using objective criteria for evaluation.

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

Provision and care for all children is outstanding. There is an over-riding respect for the unique nature of each individual that informs a culture of teaching and learning that can be personalised for each child as it is needed. All children are known individually by teachers and support staff. Children also understand each other needs and they directly contribute to the achievement and happiness of their peers. The support and service that children provide for each other as monitors, peer mediators and as playground friends is outstanding. The school does not compromise its high expectations which means that all succeed including those children who need extensive support for their learning or behaviour or because of home circumstances. Academically their progress is good and children leave school with above average standards. Children's personal and spiritual development is outstanding. They are enthusiastic, thoughtful, confident, curious, kind, willing to engage in learning, reflective, responsive to the needs of others and exceptionally well behaved, Their personal development adds value to the education they receive. It stems from good teaching and a curriculum rich in opportunities for discussion and reflection; one supplemented by many club activities and residential visits. Children taken to Hornsea experience a programme removed from all materialism and are given the opportunity to think and be amazed about the different environment they experience. School display and the school grounds are used to promote their awareness of nature and their place in the world. Relationships within the school are excellent; they are manifestly a product of a Christian mission. The effective and co-ordinated work of all staff, foundation governors and volunteers stems from a deep rooted commitment to the ethos and purpose of the school and is a model for a Christian-inspired response to meeting different children's needs.

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

Collective worship is a joyous daily event in the life of the school. Clearly marked out as different from other activities by a lighted candle, singing and prayer it brings the whole school community together and is valued by both children and the adults working with them. Collective worship, carefully planned by the head teacher and the parish priest, includes major themes, festivals, appropriate church liturgy and elements of other faith festivals. Collective worship and associated activities such as prayerful circle time are pivotal to building the children's very high spiritual awareness. They vividly remember what they have experienced, particularly when inspired through singing, influenced by exciting visual aids or following an interesting presentation. Collective worship has given the whole school community strength to face trauma for example following the recent death of a serving member of staff. School collective worship transfers to the parish church for a family service once each month. Other special services are held there, for example at Christmas when attendance is very high. The impact of collective worship is now carefully measured by the head teacher through her extensive conversations with children. Currently children contribute through their enthusiastic singing, giving readings and writing prayers but they are not yet centrally involved in planning themes and creating acts of collective worship themselves. No children are withdrawn by their parents from collective worship or religious education.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

The profile of religious education in the experience of the children and the work of the school has risen significantly since the last inspection. Teachers' confidence to deliver the subject has grown and everyone now recognises its significance within the mission of the school. The overall quality of teaching is good and managers evaluate it accurately. There is some outstanding practice. Young children, thinking about what they value as 'special' were helped by their teacher to link their feelings with Christian teaching. Older children were challenged to recognise signs of religious faith in the community. In a lesson observed, skilled classroom management sustained the learning of a large class in a crowded room. Children's excellent behaviour and thoughtful response adds value to the effectiveness of the teaching and grows their spirituality. There is a good curriculum using the diocesan syllabus supplemented by sections of the local authority agreed scheme covering aspects other faiths. Work is pitched at the correct level for children's expected academic development but the school does not yet have in place a system to record the standard and progress in RE for each child. This means that the school cannot yet report to parents if children are doing as well as they can in this key subject. Children respond well, they can recall many key facts and are eager to discuss the difficult questions and apparent contradictions in what they have learned. Older children discussing the nature of God remained open-minded even when confronting the truth that there is no simple protection against evil.

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

The Headteacher provides outstanding leadership with vision, commitment and accurate evaluation. Her skill in communicating with everyone, especially parents and children, has built unity of purpose in the school community. Highly effective middle managers have established good religious education and grown children's outstanding personal development. The school has an outgoing professional curiosity to bring in good ideas and establish best practice. There are very high expectations concerning what children will achieve, how they will behave and in what ways they will mature. These are established through the consistent application of the principles of the school Christian mission and there is an outstanding commitment by all staff to making this succeed. Foundation governors give generously of their time, get involved with the work of the school, offer good support and are committed to its success. While they are involved with monitoring aspects of the school such as collective worship, they are not yet using systematic methods for evaluation and review. This currently is restricting the extent of the challenge they can bring for school improvement and informing their thinking about how this may be achieved. Links with the local church are strengthening again following the end of the inter-regnum and the school makes valued contributions to parish worship. Foundation governors and managers share a common drive to serve the local community by offering more early-years provision and giving children support in their development with many extra-curricular activities and new spaces, such as the new spiritual garden, to explore their understanding. The school mission is clearly thought out, well communicated and used to inform decisions at every level. The quality education and the welcome for all children results in parents justifiably having very high confidence in the school. Small wonder that the school is over subscribed.

SIAS report November 2008 Alverthorpe St Paul's VA School, Wakefield WF2 0BT