



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Alverthorpe St Paul's Church of England Voluntary Aided School 3-11 years

St Pauls Drive
Alverthorpe
Wakefield
WF2 0BT

Diocese: Wakefield

Local authority: Wakefield

Dates of inspection: 19 March 2014

Date of last inspection: 21 November 2008

School's unique reference number: 108253

Headteacher: Mrs C Chell

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Geraldine Cooper 696

School context

St Paul's school has 281 pupils and serves the mixed residential districts on the outskirts of the city of Wakefield. Since the last inspection a 26 place Nursery has been added. Class sizes in Key Stage 2 are above average due to the popularity of the school. The majority of pupils are of white British origin, 2.8% of pupils have a first language other than English. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals and pupil premium is below the national average but rising. 5.4% of pupils are at school action plus. Attainment is above the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Alverthorpe, St Paul's CE VA School 3-11 years as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- A strong and dedicated school leadership which has placed clearly defined Christian values at the heart of an experiential and creative curriculum.
- Confident and articulate pupils with a developed sense of Christian values.
- The impact of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development on all aspects of learning.

Areas to improve

- Enhance pupil progress in RE through effective use of marking against RE rather than generic criteria.
- Embed the involvement of the wider school community, including foundation governors in planning, recording and evaluating collective worship.

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

A distinctively Christian character of the school is evident in all areas of the school. Christian values are prominently displayed throughout the school and pupils of all ages naturally make reference to them in the context of their learning and behaviour. Pupils are proud of their understanding, and application, of Koinonia. Expectations are high and pupils of all abilities aspire to do well both academically and socially. The distinctively Christian character is

recognised by all members of the school community as making a significant contribution to the excellent relationships. Parents describe the school as a place where children learn because they are always supported in being 'the best they can be'. The consistent reference to core Christian values gives pupils a strong sense of forgiveness. Pupils are confident in asserting that 'there's always a second chance' which enables them to quickly resolve situations and focus on learning. The curriculum is creative and stimulating, offering opportunities for reflection and exploration. An excellently managed Year 4 lesson enabled pupils to reflect on their recent residential visit, the poetry written by the pupils demonstrated the impact of the experience and a profound sense of the mystery of creation. Year 3 pupils were observed working collaboratively with pupils from a range of ethnic and social backgrounds as part of their 'Cohesion Day'. This is a well established opportunity for pupils to develop an understanding of, and respect for, diversity which has achieved national acclaim through 'RE Today'. The connections that the pupils make on this project will be developed further when they link with St Mary's CE (VA) school to visit a Mosque in central Wakefield. In RE pupils have the opportunity to study a range of religions which further enhances their understanding of diversity. Pupils recognise and talk coherently about the links between collective worship, RE and other areas of the curriculum e.g. pupils in a Year 2 RE class readily made links between learning about creation and their science display. The emphasis on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development creates an environment in which all pupils flourish academically and socially. The learning mentor works collaboratively with parents to maintain consistency for vulnerable pupils. The impact of the carefully structured nurture group can be seen in the way that the group are able to participate in lessons and make progress in line with their peers.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.

Collective worship is clearly central to the school's Christian identity. The focal point of worship is attractive and uses a range of stimuli to demonstrate God's presence in the community. This table is kept in a central place in the school entrance when not in use for worship thus enhancing the impact of the schools distinctive character. Pupils of all ages enter the hall with a sense of reverence which requires minimal intervention from staff. They were clearly engaged in the very informative and thoughtful worship led by a group of year 6 pupils. The leaders had a clear understanding of prayer which they explained and reinforced effectively through the use of a self made video and a quiz. The concluding song, accompanied by tambourines and joyous clapping was worship in the true meaning of the word. Year 2 pupils were observed learning about prayer in an RE lesson in which the teacher made a clear link to collective worship as she talked about the Lord's Prayer. The emphasis on prayer across the whole school is evident from the prominent prayer space in each classroom. Pupils of all ages spoke confidently about the significance of prayer from Reception children explaining the significance of their special prayer tree to the member of the Nurture group who described his feeling of peace when he held the holding cross. Pupils of all ages talk articulately about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit and have a strong sense of 'God is with us'. Their understanding of the Trinity has been greatly enhanced through the celebration of Pentecost, in addition to Christmas, Easter and harvest. The local incumbent and a foundation governor lead collective worship on a regular basis. Pupils are encouraged to attend 'Funky Faith' on a Monday. The church is used for special services and celebrations and is also regularly visited to support the curriculum. The school environment and the curriculum have enabled the development of a fluidity between collective worship, RE and SMSC development which provides pupils with the opportunity to immerse themselves, as little or as much as they wish, in an understanding of the Christian faith. Pupils encounter, through display and opportunities for discussion with Christianity as a world religion in which 'people show that Jesus looks like them'. Systems of planning and evaluating collective worship are reviewed regularly by the SIAMS committee which has implemented the recommendation of the previous inspection to develop the role of children in collective worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious education and SMSC development are given a very high priority in the school. SMSC is led by a Serving Leader in Education (SLE), who, in collaboration with the RE Co-ordinator has made significant progress in strengthening religious education across the school. They are, in conjunction with the SIAMS Committee, implementing an ambitious action plan focussed on achieving the RE Quality Mark. A wide range of strategies including Circle Time and Philosophy for Children have enhanced teaching and learning in RE which pupils consistently described as interesting and fun. Planning and progression through assessment for learning are exemplified by lead staff in order to ensure consistency across the school. The school has benefitted from high quality support from the Wakefield Diocesan Education Team and also from RE Today Services. The quality of thoughtful and creative writing in English shows evidence of the impact of RE and the strong focus on spiritual development. Imaginative use is made of IT and social media to stimulate discussion. There is a strong engagement with Easter and the events of Holy Week which is imaginatively captured in Year 5 RE which used the concept of the labyrinth to reflect on Jesus' life journey. Success criteria are set in accordance with the Wakefield Diocesan Syllabus. Year 6 pupils demonstrated an understanding of attainment above, below and at expected standards for their year through a discussion activity which related to the learning goals for their deeper questioning of how and why an object or place brings people closer to God. Pupils work demonstrated deep and creative thinking. Although RE learning goals are set and shared with pupils book scrutiny indicates that work is not always marked against these criteria. Pupil progress in RE is routinely tracked and pupils are performing in line with, rather than above, performance in English.

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

The school is led by a very capable headteacher who has a deep rooted understanding of the values and vision which are the foundations of a successful church school. She shares these with her staff and with the governing body with whom she has a very good working relationship. Foundation governors are well informed and committed to their responsibilities toward the school, and to the role that they have as both critical friend and pastoral support. All members of the school community recognise and describe the impact of the school's Christian values on learning and achievement which is above national expectations. Parents see the school embedding their Christian values in the daily life of the pupils and as 'taking the whole family under the school's wing'. They describe the school as being very explicit about the Christian foundation of the educational experience from which pupils benefit, the impact of this being seen in pupils' positive attitudes to learning and consequent achievement. Religious education and collective worship are seen as being of considerable significance in explaining and promoting the vision and values of the school. The impact of this is evident in the way that pupils of all ages are eager to articulate these values. The headteacher has established a committee for monitoring and evaluating progress against SIAMS criteria. The evaluation is insightful and has led to a carefully structured action plan. The committee has ensured that areas of development from the previous inspection have been addressed and strengths maintained. The devolution of responsibility for the SIAMS action plan, coupled with external training, has enabled the SMSC leader and RE co-ordinator to gain a thorough understanding of church school leadership. The school works closely and effectively with the diocese and other schools as exemplified in the celebration of Creation at Wakefield Cathedral. The school hosts local uniformed groups which enhances its already strong links with the neighbouring church which is seen as an 'extension' to the school environment.

SIAMS report March 2014. St Paul's C of E, VA School 3-11 years, Wakefield WF2 0BE