

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### Adlington St Paul's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Railway Road  
Adlington  
Chorley  
Lancashire  
PR6 9QZ

<b>Diocese:</b>	<b>Blackburn</b>
Local authority:	Lancashire
Dates of inspection:	23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2009
Date of last inspection:	11th May 2007
School's unique reference number:	119460
Headteacher:	Mrs Marilyn Robertson
Inspector's name and number:	Mr Mike Graham (286)

#### School context

St Paul's Primary School is a Voluntary Aided Church school with 175 children on roll. The children come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. They are mainly white British with a few non-British heritage children who are very well integrated. The percentage of children with special educational needs is below average. The school is situated in three separate buildings and shares the site with the Parish Church of St Paul. The vast majority of children come from Adlington.

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

St Paul's has a distinctive Christian ethos. Christian values and attitudes form the foundation of school life and have a significant impact on children's spiritual development. Caring relationships within school demonstrate Christian values very well. Links with the parish church and the local community are close and mutually beneficial.

#### Established strengths

- The strong Christian family ethos of the school
- The very close links with St Paul's church

#### Focus for development

- Increase the children's involvement in the planning, delivery and evaluation of worship
- Include visits to places of worship and visits from members of other faiths in the RE programme

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

The school's Christian values make a strong impact on the children enabling them to flourish as individuals. There is a very clear Christian basis to every aspect of the school's work. As a result all the children know that they are valued, special and secure. A year 6 boy said that the best thing about the school is that 'It's a safe place to be'. The children are exuberant and enthusiastic yet polite and respectful. The Christian ethos supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children well regardless of their faith background. All, including a Buddhist year 6 boy and a Hindu year 2 girl, clearly feel part of this large Christian family with a strong moral code. The school's work on community cohesion is firmly based on values of love, service and friendship. This is supported by the close relationship with the church, shared use of the buildings and links with South Africa. There are joint ventures with neighbouring schools, such as the Advent concert in St Paul's church, that draw the community together. The children have a sound grasp of the principles

involved. There are numerous opportunities for them to assume responsibilities, and they gain maturity and leadership skills by becoming prefects, buddies and members of the school and eco councils. The councils function well, and play an important part in evaluation, decision-making and modelling good behaviour. A wide range of extra-curricular clubs in sport and the arts, including a very popular bible club, gives many opportunities for the children to practise their skills. Relationships within school demonstrate Christian values superbly. 'We play well together', and 'The adults listen to you' were typical comments. An accidental collision in the year 2 class prompted an immediate and sincere apology from the teacher to the boy concerned. The school environment is used well to encourage spiritual development and appreciation of God's creation. There are bright, relevant and thought-provoking displays, often with RE and worship as their theme.

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

Prayer and worship are used extensively in school and not just during collective worship, and there is a lovely school prayer recently written by some year 6 children. Children's attitudes to worship are very positive. 'You get to talk to God'; 'We sing hymns...we like the lively and funny ones' and 'Father David tells us interesting stories' were three comments. They would however like to be more involved in all aspects of worship. All children and staff take part in worship with enthusiasm and gain inspiration and spiritual growth from it because it is relevant, varied and sincere. Activities provided have a clear impact on the children's spiritual development. The worship observed was relaxed yet reverent, with good singing, excellent telling of a story and three prayers from year 6 children all on the theme of forgiveness. The sensitive leadership by the headteacher included some delightful interaction with the children, drawing from a year 4 girl an excellent comment about it being '...easy to say "sorry" to friends because you trust each other'. The Headteacher spoke movingly about praying with children, staff and parents during difficult times such as bereavement. The links with the church in worship are good. Understanding of Anglican faith and practice is developed well. The vicar has a key role, leading school worship weekly in church, celebrating a child-friendly Eucharist for the whole school termly and for each class annually. Most year 6 children are confirmed in the spring term each year and recently some parents involved with their children in confirmation classes responded by becoming Sunday school teachers. This indicates the impact made by good and encouraging teaching on the basics of the Christian faith.

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

Standards in RE are good. The children are successfully encouraged to examine the differences religion makes in people's lives. An expanding portfolio of children's work and termly moderation involving all the staff help to ensure that the RE provided maximises achievement. In RE lessons children's understanding grows because they are given plenty of opportunities to reflect on and discuss issues. The children are very positive about RE and understand the value of studying faiths other than Christianity. Community cohesion is helped by the fact that one Hindu parent has visited to talk about her faith with the younger children but, as the school accepts, understanding of other faiths is not fully developed. The children talked excitedly about their favourite lessons. A child commented that they get 'hard questions that make our imaginations explode!' RE promotes the Christian character of the school very effectively, with a strong emphasis on St Paul's teachings and the core Christian values, based on love. In the lessons observed there were excellent elements. The warmth and openness between children and staff were a joy to see. During a 'decision alley' exercise in year 2, forgiveness and the issues surrounding it were debated using the story of Zaccheus. A child said, 'You'll be rich if you forgive' to which the sensitive response from the teacher was, 'Maybe not, but you'll be rich in other ways'. In year 3 imagination and empathy were stimulated by sensitive exploration of 'how would you feel in the presence of?', leading to the shepherds' experience in the stable. The teacher knelt at one point as he talked, subtly demonstrating their probable response. The progression in understanding was clear and impressive.

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

The school leadership, including governors, has engaged very well with distinctive Christian values in defining their vision for the school. The link with the teachings of St Paul is perhaps an obvious strategy, but it has been made with imagination and flair. A recent training day on self-evaluation as a church school has raised awareness for the whole staff team. The headteacher's own faith is evident in all aspects of her leadership. She commented, 'The church ethos is at the heart of all we do.' Leaders and governors are preparing for future leadership of church schools through good management and delegation, encouraging the skills development of RE co-ordinators. Areas for development from the previous report have been successfully implemented. The partnership between the school, the church and the community, including parents, is strong. Several governors are also members of the church council, providing natural and effective links. The vicar is prominent in maintaining a welcoming ethos, and is always '...glad to have a chance to share the news of Jesus Christ'. Parents are delighted with the school, and all are given regular and varied opportunities for feedback. Comments from parents included, 'I came into school to talk about Hinduism...there are no problems' (about acceptance of different faith groups), 'Father David always has time for you' and 'There's a Christian atmosphere' (around school).

SIAS report November 2009, Adlington St Paul's, Chorley, PR6 9QZ

