

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

<b>St Paul's Heathside Church of England Primary School</b>	
Heathside Grove, Walkden, Worsley, Manchester M28 3NZ	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Manchester</b>
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Salford
Date of inspection	17 November 2016
Date of last inspection	September 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 105937
Headteacher	Joanne Rowley
Inspector's name and number	Mike Graham 286

### School context

St. Paul's is a below average sized but expanding primary school. A new building is already in place to receive the anticipated doubling of the school's intake. Most children are of White British background with a growing number of children from other backgrounds and cultures.

Mobility is above average. The proportion of children entitled to the 'pupil premium', extra funding for the disadvantaged, is well above the national average. The school serves an area of council housing which experiences a significant degree of urban deprivation. The Head Teacher and most of the teaching staff have been appointed since the last inspection.

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

- The clear Christian vision of the headteacher: 'Christ's teaching is at the heart of everything we do for our school community', sets the tone for all of the school's caring work with the children. All staff and governors follow her lead with conviction.
- Christian values permeate and drive all aspects of school life and are lived out in the outstanding and loving relationships between all members of the school. Mutual respect and care ensure that children are secure and happy in their learning, so that they make good to outstanding progress.
- Excellent worship and religious education (RE) lead to impressive maturity in the children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural (SMSC) development.

### Areas to improve

- Devise a new child-friendly mission statement to reinforce and state boldly the Christian vision that is the beating heart of the school.
- Ensure that the Christian values, on which the school's ethos is based, are securely linked to Jesus' life and teachings, and are made explicit in all areas of the school's work, to provide clarity for all members of the school community.

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

Christian values of love, respect, peace, tolerance, trust and hope are the foundations of all the school's work. The loving Christian care lavished on every child brings security and a sense of fun in learning. The headteacher is rightly proud of the fact that, in her own words, this has created 'an oasis of positivity'. There is no fear of failure or of making mistakes, so that the children are able to give of their best. The academic progress achieved, as recognised by the local advisor during her recent visit and by Ofsted last March, is good to outstanding. The school's own record-keeping data confirms this, and indeed there have been steady improvements in results over the last three years. Work with the vulnerable and disadvantaged children is outstanding, with the learning mentor playing a key role in support and encouragement of children and families. This results in outstanding progress for this group of children and in improved attendance levels, which are now reaching national expectations.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is very impressive. They have a clear sense of right and wrong, and show respect and good manners to all. They do not just know about the Christian values that are exemplified by the staff, they live them. Their behaviour is exemplary. However, not all are clear about the origins of these values in the life and teaching of Jesus. The children's spiritual and cultural development is also excellent. This results from a rich and varied curriculum and a wide variety of extra curricular activities, notably through the 'children's university'. They are full of joy in learning and the depth to which their exploration of God's world is taken enhances their personal spirituality. The 'reflection garden', work on the school's allotment and caring for the school's four guinea pigs are examples of such learning.

Another key contribution is made by RE. The subject co-ordinator is skilful, sensitive and full of enthusiasm for her subject. This leads to outstanding teaching throughout the school. The children's knowledge of Christianity and the impact this has on the Christian character of the school is highly significant. Their understanding is deepened as they explore Christian themes such as Easter through visits to church for 'the Easter Experience'. They also study other world faiths to good effect. They are open and accepting of those from different faiths. One Year 6 boy said 'When we learned about the Hindus' different gods it helped us to reflect and be tolerant'. Relevant Bible verses back up the messages provided on many interactive displays, giving an authentic Christian environment for children and adults.

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

Collective worship at St. Paul's is sincere and relevant, and makes a significant difference to the lives of everyone in the school family. The variety of leaders, children, staff and clergy, and the wide-ranging evaluation ensures that worship engages everyone involved and is constantly evolving and improving. The team vicar provides superb storytelling from a range of sources and brings appropriate experiences of Anglican traditions in worship. She brings theological insights to the children and staff. For instance her response to a child's suggestion that 'God created Jesus' was 'Well, Jesus was with God when he was creating, and the Holy Spirit was there too'.

Bible readings, drama, prayer and excellent singing, often with actions to emphasise the meaning of the song or hymn, are all part of a rich tapestry of spiritual inspiration. The children and adults present thus gain great insights into the Christian faith and values. The children have a good understanding of God as Father and Creator and of Jesus as Son and Saviour. They are less sure about the Holy Spirit but some have a clear grasp of key elements. One Year 6 boy commented that after Jesus returned to heaven, 'the Holy Spirit came with crackling fire!' The older children are certainly aware that the disciples were empowered at Pentecost.

Prayer is seen and understood as a natural part of a life of faith. The children accept quite naturally that 'God is able to listen to our thoughts' as a Year 5 girl put it. The children also welcome the prayer corners in each classroom where, as one child said, 'We can take some time to think about God and other people'. Prayer features frequently throughout the school day, not just in worship, although a child said insightfully, 'Prayer is worshipping God'.

Parents and carers join with the school and the church community at key points in the church calendar to worship in church together. The children play important roles in leading such services at Harvest, Christmas and Easter. These occasions undoubtedly play their part in maintaining and strengthening the bond between the communities.

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

The headteacher leads the school with a clear Christian vision. Her own faith shines through all her work and relationships in school, with the focus always on the well-being of the children. The leadership team, staff and governors follow and support this lead with immense commitment. The Christian love and support given to every child releases their full potential, often from a starting point well below national averages. The team vicar commented that 'The school is incredibly caring. It shows God's love in the way it cares for its children'.

The vision is clear to almost all members of the school community, and everyone admires the caring and wholehearted work of the staff team. However, the mission statement does not do justice to the school's Christ-centred approach. The whole community benefits from the fact that the Christian values are not just written about and displayed, but are lived out by staff and children day by day. The lay reader and other foundation governors are closely involved in school, helping with trips and in classes, thus reinforcing the strong links with the church and governors. They know the children well and add to the already loving and caring ethos.

The impact made by the school's Christian vision is secured by detailed, efficient and strategic planning. This is open and honest, with governors keen to challenge when appropriate as well as bringing well-deserved encouragement to the staff team. Issues raised by the previous report have been tackled thoroughly and successfully. Future leadership in church schools is promoted through excellent teamwork, good delegation and high quality in-service training.

Partnerships and relationships with other local schools, St. Paul's church, the diocese and the community at large are strong and mutually beneficial. Examples include the choir's gift of singing to a local care home and at the MEN Arena for the annual 'Young Voices' concert. Giving to local and international charities reinforces the children's understanding of Christian compassion through helping others. The children take a strong lead in combating and preventing bullying through the 'anti-bullying ambassadors' team. Prevention and support were highlighted by one of the team, who added, 'If they stand on their own and they look sad...you can help'. Parents and carers are immensely proud of their school, and appreciate the significant improvements made recently in terms of academic, caring and building development. Comments included, 'The staff are all great!' and 'The Christian side is really valuable'.

SIAMS report November 2016, St Paul's Heathside CofE VC Primary School, Walkden, Worsley, Salford, M28 3NZ