



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
Tower Hill, Much Hadham SG10 6DL

Diocese of St Albans

LA: Hertfordshire
SIAS Inspection: 22 June 2010
Previous S48 Inspection: 7 December 2006
URN: 117444
Headteacher: Mrs Judith Sparks
SIAS Inspector Name: Mrs Lizzie McWhirter
SIAS Inspector No: 244

School Context

St Andrew's is situated in the centre of a popular village. Almost all the children are from a White British background. Currently there are 215 pupils on roll. The headteacher has been in post for five years and has built a strong team around her. There are good links with the parish church and the local Roman Catholic community who share the church building.

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

St Andrew's is a school where everyone is welcomed and encouraged to reach their full potential. Pupils are given the opportunities and experiences which supports their Christian pilgrimage following the example of the patron saint on whom the school is founded.

Established strengths

- The pupils' love of learning and commitment to school community life
- The vision and leadership of the headteacher supported by the whole school community
- The opportunities offered to pupils in collective worship and religious education [RE], which supports their spiritual development

Focus for development

- Find a way for pupils' reflections on worship to be actioned by the governing body
- Implementing the new RE curriculum

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

St Andrew's provides an inspirational learning environment where children are valued and cared for as a result of the inclusive Christian ethos. Very positive relationships exist between staff and pupils in which pupils are confident and happy and want to come to school. The school aims and mission statement are prominently displayed, constantly reminding pupils that they are integral to the life of the school and belong to a community founded on Christian principles, where there is forgiveness and where they can make a positive contribution. Displays enhance pupils' learning and contribute greatly to pupils' spiritual development. The school is seen to value the widest range of achievement through the many activities offered to pupils. An excellent example of this is the Hertfordshire Sing Up charity concert recently held at The Royal Albert Hall. Pupils enjoy donating to charity through which they experience the Christian values of service and gratitude, as they 'try to give away money and help the poor people in the world.' such as support for their link school in the Masai Mara, Kenya. The gardening club are involved in a project with St Elizabeth's Home and School to transform the pond and wildlife area. It is one which pupils are proud of and enjoy being able to make a difference to their environment. All pupils have a voice through the school council. Pupils speak of how fantastic the teachers are and how they value their friends. Parents speak highly of the 'spiritual caring community feel with good academic standards.'

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

The quality of collective worship offered to pupils is excellent, contributing greatly to pupils' spiritual development. Worship is clearly central in the life of this aided school. It is well planned, delivered and fully inclusive of all, with a focus on the Anglican year and social and emotional aspects of learning [SEAL] themes. There is excellent support from the rector and other worship leaders from the local community. Head and Rector work closely together, whilst listening to the voice of pupils and acting on it, which was an area for development from the last inspection. A good example of this is a planned series on The Lord's Prayer. Next steps include taking the children's reflections to meetings of the governing body so that worship is constantly improving in style and integrity. In the worship observed to celebrate St Alban, Christian saint and martyr; pupils were able to dramatise the story, offer prayer and make connections with the wider family of the diocese, and celebrate their Anglican heritage. Major festivals in the church year are celebrated in the parish church, including Harvest, Christmas, Easter, and St Andrew's day. An Ascension-tide service is held in school. Pupils take ownership for these important services. Parents speak highly of these special times in church. Pupils especially speak of the joy of singing hymns which 'make you believe in God' and worshipping together as a church school, raising their voices in church. As one pupil put it, 'stories help us learn and hymns have stories inside them', whilst another pupil spoke of enjoying reading the Bible in church and 'believing God is always with you.'

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

Excellence and enjoyment is seen in RE. Pupil attitudes are the strength in this subject which greatly supports their spiritual development. Lessons observed were consistently good with outstanding features, showing the good relationships that exist. Year 2 pupils are able to reflect on prayer having studied puzzling questions. Year 6 pupils use the creation account in Genesis in their global bibles as a starting point for their research on responsibility for the environment. Their thoughtful reactions as well as their excellent level of theological literacy show they learn well from their studies. Plans to take forward a gifted and talented register in RE further enhances an overview of standards. An effective system of tracking and monitoring for assessment is in place which informs achievement in RE, showing how the school has moved on from the previous inspection. The school's development plan rightly identifies embedding the new Hertfordshire agreed syllabus scheme of work with the diocesan Christianity units. Pupils speak very strongly about Christian truth and belief, valuing and respecting other faiths, finding it 'interesting to learn about different religions.' RE has a high profile in the school as the rector is the link governor for this important subject; whilst the headteacher is working closely with the RE co-ordinator, who is also the deputy headteacher, to ensure continuity of its leadership and management.

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

The distinctive Christian vision is clearly evident and effectively promoted by the headteacher with the full support of the whole school community so that the school's strong Christian foundation is shared and celebrated. The headteacher, Rector, governors and staff inspire this Christian vision for St Andrew's and work hard at establishing good relationships. They are very committed to the school, above all caring for its pupils. Everyone feels valued and all model the school vision. As a result, pupils are very clear that St Andrew's is a church school and they are equipped with the tools for prayer and worship. Governors take an active role in the life of the school and are open to new ways of taking the school forward, especially in their monitoring role. Church and school are seen to be working closely together, embodying the close ties which exist between the two. There are good links with the diocese, especially through the RE adviser so that all uphold the distinctive character of the school. St Andrew's shines as a beacon in the area it serves, thus modelling and contributing to community cohesion.

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