



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Mill Race
Stanstead Abbots
Ware
SG12 8BZ

Diocese of St Albans

LA:	Hertfordshire
SIAS Inspection:	22 nd March 2010
Previous S23 Inspection:	October 2007
URN:	117407
Headteacher:	Rosemary Woodall
SIAS Inspector Name:	Alan Thornsby
SIAS Inspector No:	NS 137

School Context

St Andrew's Church of England serves the village of Stanstead Abbots and the surrounding area. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is less than average. The leadership team of the school has been appointed since the previous inspection.

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

Christian values are at the heart of this school 'like writing through a stick of rock.' Pupils have a great sense of joy in being part of the school. This is shared by parents, staff and governors. This results in a secure learning environment where children make good academic progress. The high profile of Christian values, and the role models of adults in school, means that pupils show and can explain the importance of love, care and respect. The ethos of this school gives pupils a firm knowledge base on which to make moral decisions and choices, as a foundation for their future lives as members of a multicultural society

Established strengths

- The commitment and determination of leaders and managers in ensuring the best opportunities for successful learning
- The partnership between the headteacher and deputy
- The high profile of Christian values in the policy and practice of the school
- The impact of Christian values and worship on the personal development of pupils

Focus for development

- Provide opportunities in classrooms for pupils to reflect on Christian values, spiritual issues and prayer.
- Implement the development points already identified in the school's self-evaluation and development plan.

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

This very welcoming school has a caring, inclusive ethos because Christian values are lived out in action in the daily life and routines of everyone in the school. The current value of the month has a very high profile in worship, is the planned theme for circle time and Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) and is included in the weekly newsletter to parents. Because Christian values are so well embedded in the life of the school they extend into the home life of the children. They make comments such as 'here we learn valuable life skills.' and 'everyone is special and unique and God loves us all.' Relationships between everyone in school are excellent. There is a real joy in the shared experience of teaching and learning. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding because of the respect, care and tolerance the values programme instils into their actions. A range of incentives and sanctions securely supports them. These include a lunchtime club that supports discipline, but includes time for confidential problem solving. Playground mediators sort out problems and ensure the use of saying sorry and forgiveness. The school also makes excellent use of a trained adult 'active listener' to support vulnerable children. The social and moral development of pupils is excellent because of the positive way pupils respond to the school ethos. Spiritual development is strength of the school. Pupils respond well to posing big questions, having opportunities, for example, to hot seat the vicar with questions such as 'Did God have a grandad?' and 'who created the creator?' The sharing of hatching eggs and following the chicks' development, by the whole school extend the spiritual experience of children. This is also aided by sharing displays of religious education (RE) work with the church. Learning targets for lessons, 'we are learning today' (WALT), are often related to the ethos of the school in displays of work. Although pupils are challenged in their thinking in class, they do not have opportunities to make personal responses to values in interactive or reflective displays in classrooms. The school has developed a link with a school in the village of Fass, Gambia but is aware of the need to maintain effective links with other faiths and cultures.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is outstanding because of the meticulous and rigorous planning, monitoring and evaluation procedures. Staff decide the outline of themes. The school leadership team link these to Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) values and the vicar adds the Christian perspective, everyone considering the monitoring from the previous cycle. This detailed planning is shared with the staff so they can make links in planning the curriculum to ensure worship themes impact on the whole of the school day and beyond. It is this planning cycle that creates the high profile and the secure impact of Christian values on the school. Pupils enjoy a range of leaders and formats, explaining 'worship teaches us to be happy and honest and we learn how to be more tolerant.' They describe the input of the vicar as 'tells us about Jesus and how to respect other people.' Although children create a reverent atmosphere in the hall, there is also a very strong feeling of anticipation and excitement as they wait for worship to begin. They join in with the introductory music quietly singing and finger clicking. Their enjoyment and understanding of the words of the song prompted a child to ask if they could learn the song or even create their own set of more applicable words. All children are totally engaged by lively story telling and role-play to the extent of one of the youngest children shouting out 'God did!' as a response to the question in the drama 'and who made the birds?' Pupils are able to make links between values and the teaching of Jesus, explaining 'perhaps Jesus did not talk about happiness, but he said

that some people were blessed and so they were happy then.’ They have a good knowledge of the liturgical year and explain the relevance of the school logo, a fish created from smaller fish and its links with St Andrew. ‘We all work together and can tell people about Jesus, just like his disciples.’ The church is used for festival services as well as a place of learning. Acts of worship in church are well supported by parents. They describe in particular the Leavers’ Service is moving because ‘it has a great sense of someone leaving a family, but well equipped with a good foundation for future life.’

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

The headteacher, in partnership with the deputy share a well-communicated vision to provide a learning environment where children can make good moral choices in any situation based on their knowledge of Christian values. The governing body, and especially foundation governors actively maintain and drive forward the high profile planning, monitoring and evaluation procedures that enable Christian values to be the focus of practice and policy of school. These also keep staff and governors informed of the strengths and areas for development, such as extending opportunities to raise pupils’ experience of other faiths within the community. This high profile is maintained because values are a weekly item on staff meeting agenda. Maintaining the ethos of the school is part of the rolling programme related to church school distinctiveness that is part of the school development plan. This allows the members of the school community to support each other in times of difficulty. Parents are a valued part of the school community. Parents are informed and involved in the daily life of the school by a range of formal and informal meetings and regular newsletters. Parents are proud of their connection with the school, making a typical comment ‘it is like belonging to a very close but big family, a tight community who support each other.’ They praise the values of the school that impact on the lives of children at home as well as in school. ‘Our children know about right and wrong. They know the true value of friendship and have a have a good foundation for their future.’ The school has good links with the local church, sharing events and displays. The vicar has a high profile in school and provides pastoral support when needed. The school has excellent links with the pre-school that shares the site. There are developing links with a local school for pupils with severe learning difficulties. These help pupils to understand the diversity within a community. This is further extended by sharing events with the village community.