

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Worlebury St Paul's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School,
Woodspring Avenue,
Weston super Mare,
BS22 9RH.

Diocese: Bath & Wells

Local authority: North Somerset
Dates of inspection: 12th July 2012
Date of last inspection: 5th November 2007
School's unique reference number: 109241
Headteacher: Mrs Gillian Quick
Inspector's name and number: Julian Thompson - 114

School context

Worlebury St Paul's Church of England V.A Primary School is a smaller than average primary school which was previously a First School. From September 2012 the school will have the full primary age range. The school buildings are modern, have recently been extended and include a large hall. The school occupies an elevated site in the benefice which includes the parish of St Paul's Church Kewstoke and St Peter's Church Milton.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Worlebury St Paul's School as a Church of England school is good

This is a very caring church school in which all staff work effectively to ensure every child is nurtured, safe and treated as an individual. Particular time and attention has been given to ensure a supportive learning environment appropriate to the school's Christian foundation.

Established strengths

- The high level of individual care and nurture for all the children
- The very good relationships which have been developed between and amongst the children, staff and the wider school community
- An excellent learning environment which reflects the school's Christian foundation and provides very good opportunities for reflection and children's spiritual development

Focus for development

- As the school continues to grow, to review and develop the school's partnership with the parishes of St Paul's Kewstoke and St Peter's Milton so that there is mutual support and benefit
- Evaluate and develop the way in which RE contributes to the school's distinctive Christian character by, when appropriate, ensuring teachers provide more examples and models from the Bible which support their teaching about values and moral principles

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

The school's distinctive Christian ethos is celebrated and enriched by a vibrant learning environment. Christian signs and symbols are given prominence and there are many interesting displays which give opportunities for children to pause, reflect and learn. All the staff provide a high level of care, safety and understanding for children. Warm relationships exist between and amongst children and staff. Children and families experiencing difficulties or change are sensitively supported, as one child said, "If you are new to the school the teachers help you settle in and you soon find a friend." Christian values are clearly evident in the school aims and impact on the life of the school, The school badge, designed by pupils reflects this and highlights four core values of the school; joy, love, care and peace. These clearly have an impact on the children. They behave very well, are proud of all their school

provides and make good progress in all aspects of their learning. One child said “The teachers are really kind, they make it the best school ever”. The school is continuing to involve children and stakeholders in developing its distinctive Christian ethos as it grows to be a primary school with a full key stage two age range. In particular staff are rightly planning how children in the older age groups can explore and learn about the Christian ethos of the school. Areas of the building and school grounds have been very well adapted to provide opportunities for stillness and reflection. The school draws imaginatively on the children’s own interests and experience to create opportunities for spiritual development. For example, the Olympic prayer stations which encourage them to reflect on the Olympic values, an idea explored in collective worship and RE lessons during the inspection. Children with particular needs or difficulties in learning are very well supported and the attractive environment of the learning centre known as The Den, gives a strong message that the whole child will be supported. The school’s Christian foundation is appropriately reflected in the children’s work and the school’s approach. Children are encouraged to think about their own understanding of God and write their own prayers. Prayers are also said during the day. For those children who wish, the Jesus and Me (JAM) club led by a regular visitor and friend of the school provides fun activities and an opportunity to learn more of the Christian faith. The school also encourages all children to understand their wider responsibilities through a range of charitable activities and as global citizens through an established and active link with two primary schools in Tanzania.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Children listen and respond well to collective worship, especially when it is led or presented by pupils. The school has an established pattern and calendar with a good range of leaders from the school staff, linked churches and the local and wider Christian community. A clear policy gives guidance to staff and visitors on the purpose and format of worship. Since the last inspection the school has developed a thorough approach to evaluating worship. A very thoughtful and reverent atmosphere is created by displays to support worship and a table with cross and candle and music playing to help create a sense of stillness. Opening words are spoken and children know the response, as well as knowing the Grace and Lord’s Prayer. All pupils have some understanding of the Christian year through special services and celebrations. Worship themes are taken from the Christian calendar and also from the school’s social and emotional aspects of learning curriculum (SEAL). This enables topics to be reinforced in lessons and at other times. The family worship times are an outstanding feature of collective worship. Children enjoy the opportunity to present their ideas, as one older child said, “Family worship is good because we can lead it and take on some of our teacher’s ideas. We can actually have some fun doing it”. Parents and friends are welcome to attend family worship and many do. Family worship provides an opportunity for the school to welcome the church family of St Pauls and St Peters to the school. Worship is sometimes followed by an opportunity for children to celebrate individual achievements and effort as was the case during the worship observed during the inspection. This added to a strong sense of community and support. The vicar and prebendary assistant vicar are regularly involved in leading and attending worship at school. Many children like their stories and visual aids. An Agape service has been developed and is held in school three times each year. Some members of the school community feel that the service could involve more of the children. The school is currently looking at ways to make this service as actively inclusive and invitational as possible. Despite transport difficulties the school aims to visit St Paul’s church for special services. These services are sometimes led by the children.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Learners make above average progress in Religious Education (RE) across each key stage. The subject has an important place in the curriculum and their work on paper and in books is often of a high standard. The school has adopted the recently revised scheme, ‘Awareness Mystery and Value’ and links this with other curriculum areas so that learning reflects children’s own interests and experiences. Teachers’ marking and assessment is helpful and encouraging and when appropriate indicates the level each child has reached. Children’s RE work is often displayed on classroom walls or in big books which can be taken to church or shared with groups of children and parents. This is a very good feature of religious education. Teachers are skilled and use a variety of approaches to develop children’s independent thinking and reflecting skills. Teachers model a reflective approach, sometimes talking about their own experiences and beliefs. They use resources including ICT well to engage

children's interest. There are good opportunities for discussion and sharing ideas. For example, the year two children discussed what Olympic athletes should know, say and be like in order to demonstrate Olympic values. Children then moved round the class to share and display their thoughts on large pictures of athletes they had painted previously. This led to some thoughtful prayers. In other classes teachers were using the theme to encourage children to set personal goals and reflect on how they would achieve them. The school has particularly focussed on ensuring the youngest children make good progress in personal and social education during their first year at school and has used the RE curriculum to support this. Current data indicates children's progress in this area is well above national averages. Children are interested and ready to share their learning about faiths including Judaism and Islam. The school also arranges visits and visitors to develop this aspect of their learning. This is a good feature of RE. Classrooms displays are planned to encourage thinking and discussion about religion by having areas with prayers and often a Bible or cross. Children learn about the Bible and the life of Jesus as part of the RE curriculum. However, teachers could take more time to illustrate social and moral principles with examples from the Bible or life of Jesus so that children have a clearer understanding of Christian values.

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

The Headteacher provides very good leadership of the school as a church school. She knows the school community very well and has a strong personal connection with all the children and staff. She is very effectively supported by the deputy who also leads RE. The governing body are well led and clear about their role to hold the school to account. They seek the views of all stakeholders through an annual questionnaire. Recently appointed governors have attended training about the role of governors in church schools. Effective structures for planning, assessment and monitoring have been put in place for collective worship and religious education and teachers and visitors are given clear guidelines and information about school policy. Although neither of the schools two key mission statements: 'Caring for unique and special learners' and 'Every child matters every moment of the day' refer explicitly to the school's Christian foundation, the website and prospectus include the aims and ethos statements where this is made clear. The school knows its strengths and areas for development as a church school well. Leaders are rigorous and the school's evaluations are informed by very good evidence and regular monitoring by governors and leaders. There are good links with the Church of St Pauls, Kewstoke and both clergy and school leaders work hard to ensure the partnership is maintained. The steep and potentially dangerous road and the small size of St Pauls Church are making it increasingly difficult for the whole school to visit. However, initiatives such as The Holiday Club provided in the church are a good example of the way in which church and school are working together. Both communities are looking at ways to ensure an effective partnership can be sustained and developed in coming years. Relationships with parents are good; the school uses questionnaires and the website very effectively to seek the views of parents and to respond to them. Parents feel that the Headteacher and staff are approachable –one parent said "It is a listening school, if you have a problem you feel you can talk to anyone". Many parents value the church school dimension, one spoke positively about how she felt when a meeting for new parents opened with a prayer. Good use is made of the Bath and Wells Diocese for training, resources and visits including involvement in the leavers' days for Y3 and planned next year for Y6. The school has arranged for Bishop Peter of Taunton to celebrate the achievement of the school's expansion to a full Primary School on October 16th.

SIAS report 12th July Worlebury St Paul's Church of England V.A. Primary School, Worlebury, Weston-super-Mare BS229RH