



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools
Under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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LEICESTERSHIRE EDUCATION AUTHORITY

St. Peter and St. Paul Church of England Primary
School
Upper Church Street
Syston
Leicester
LE7 1HR

Inspection Dates: 5th and 13th February 2009

Section 48 Inspector: Margaret Matthews (No: 95)



SIAS Report Form

Name and address of school:	St. Peter and St. Paul Church of England Primary School Upper Church Street Syston Leicester LE7 1HR
Type of school	Primary
Status:	Aided
Diocese:	Leicester
LA:	Leicestershire
Dates of inspection:	5 and 13 February 2009
Date of last inspection:	31 January and 3 February 2006
School's Unique Ref. No:	120231
Name of Head teacher;	Miss Fiona Buchan
Inspector's name (with N.S. No):	Miss Margaret Matthews No. 95

Context
<p>The school is situated in the village/suburb of Syston, a few miles north of Leicester. It is a large school with 354 pupils on roll. The pupils come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds with the large majority being of white British heritage. Levels of attainment on entering the school are below the national average, so a greater proportion of pupils than normal need extra help with their learning. The school is housed in a 1960s building with spacious grounds and is close to the parish church.</p>

Summary Judgment
The distinctiveness and effectiveness of this school as a Church of England school are good.
<p>Christian beliefs and values are central to the life of the school. The impact of this ethos is felt across the whole school community and creates a very happy and supportive learning environment. As a result, learners' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good. Links with the parish church are exceptionally strong and contribute much to the spiritual development of children and adults in the school.</p>

Established strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school's Christian ethos in practice.• The professional skills of the headteacher and staff in working as a team.• The spiritual and moral development of pupils.• The close partnership with the parish church.

Focus for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carry out the well planned improvements in religious education.• Ensure that the toolkit reflects the school's Christian character in practice.

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

The school has come through difficult times in the last five years and has emerged successfully with improved standards. Pupils and adults have a strong sense of Christian values and share a very close bond with the parish church. These two features are strengths of the school and define its Christian character. Pupils are happy and confident because they feel safe and are well cared for. They have positive attitudes reflected in the strong voice of the school council. In meeting the needs of learners, parents believe that the school's greatest achievement is bringing out the best in children, so that good, all-round, well balanced pupils transfer to secondary education at the end of Year 6. In this Christian context, pupils are able to flourish as individuals. They talk freely of the school as a church school and of the parish priest. Rewards and certificates encourage pupils' progress, and their personal interests are well met by a wide range of after school activities. As one parent remarked, 'There seems to be so much going on in the school!' The lunchtime Christian Youth Group is extremely popular and is ably led by a teaching assistant and two representatives from the church. Worship at the end of these sessions has developed pupils' confidence and affinity with prayer. Pupils agree that, in school, they learn much about making moral decisions and all are given good spiritual support across the curriculum. Bibles are presented to each child in Year 3 so that they can use them during their time at school. Fund-raising for charity is a natural consequence of the school's ethos and reveals pupils' deep concern for others. Social events provide for the enjoyment of the whole school community, such as the harvest lunch for pupils, staff and governors after the church service. Multicultural education is improving. Learners show a keen interest, and emphasis is laid upon sharing aspects of different faiths within the school. The principle of inclusion is strong; pupils of all faiths are welcomed and encouraged to be part of Christian celebrations. The provision for different ability levels is very good. In one lesson everyone was given the chance to answer a question round the class, so that all views were heard. Relationships across the school are excellent. Pupils have great confidence in their headteacher and see all staff as helpful, fair, and willing to give extra time if needed. The school is welcoming to visitors, with attractive symbols in the reception area denoting its church status. In the classrooms, however, there are few displays supporting this. Outside, the 'Friendship' bench with the Lord's Prayer beautifully carved on it offers time and space for personal reflection.

The impact of collective worship on the school is outstanding.

Collective worship plays a key role in the life of the school and is central to its Christian witness. The impact of collective worship comes from three sources: the wide recognition within the school of the importance of collective worship; the provision via collective worship of a good moral code that pupils can relate to their everyday lives; and the frequent use and involvement of the church building and church personnel in collective worship. The quality of school worship is high, reflecting the unified and supportive approach of the whole community. The presence of all staff, along with shared moments of warmth and humour leads to a real sense of spiritual fellowship. Content and delivery are very effective, such as the use of vertical building blocks to illustrate that God is the foundation of everything we do in a church school or the intensely spiritual atmosphere which builds throughout the story of 'The Selfish Giant.' High expectations ensure that pupils behave and attend well. They answer questions quickly and correctly, showing that they are at one with the leaders and can follow the spiritual thread of the talk. Pupils believe that, 'everybody in school is kind and friendly because we learn about good morals; and that comes from collective worship.' They like acquiring knowledge about Christianity and feel that the worship gives them helpful ideas. They enjoy having visitors and particularly appreciate celebration assemblies where their achievements are recognized. The policy for collective worship is good, and oral evaluation is honest, but the formal summary in the toolkit does not reflect the high standard of worship and needs to be reviewed. Study visits to the church in RE lessons give pupils a clear understanding of Anglican worship. The above normal number of school services held there throughout the year, at major festivals, enriches the worship offered and are well supported by parents and governors. Links with the church are stronger than ever, largely owing to the ministry of the parish priest who is a popular figure with pupils. Clergy from the Methodist church also lead school worship, providing pupils with experience of another denomination. Collective worship is a prime source of Christian nurture within the school and makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The effectiveness of religious education is good.

The school has identified religious education as an area for improvement during the current year. A very good evaluation of the subject by the co-ordinator has led to excellent, realistic plans, drawn up as part of the school development plan. These include an RE week in the summer, a review of assessment criteria in order to give pupils a better idea of what they have to do to improve and concrete steps in making links with schools and places of worship relating to other world faiths. The status of RE has been low because it has not been promoted in recent years owing to the school's obligatory concentration on literacy and numeracy. That balance is now being redressed and already the progress made has raised the standard of RE from satisfactory to good. Cross curricular links with other subjects such as the topic work on Africa and India reveal this particularly well. High achieving pupils converse articulately in discussion and written work shows a definite improvement. Bible stories, parables and the study of respected people in history are well loved by pupils, enabling them to relate Christian principles to their own lives. Provision of time and resources in RE is good and the subject is gaining a higher profile. Pupils and staff communicate well. Standards of teaching and learning are good with some outstanding examples of inspirational teaching. Lessons are very well planned with stimulating introductions such as the quiz about the parish church to which pupils responded with enthusiasm. Learners are attentive and focused throughout the lessons. They show insight, understanding and knowledge because staff use high levels of praise to enthuse and motivate them. The RE co-ordinator monitors the subject effectively and reports to the foundation committee of the governing body. This committee, which includes foundation governors, carries out themed visits to the school which are not specific to, but are inclusive of, RE. Staff and governors feel that the governing body is well informed, but intend to develop this aspect of evaluation further. Moral development in RE is strong. Good progress is being made in spiritual development although this needs to be addressed more positively in some lessons where it tends to be over shadowed by too many references to literacy. Pupils of all ages are required to think more deeply about their learning in a wider sense than simple fact acquisition. Skilful teaching techniques elicit authentic spiritual and emotional responses from older pupils, for example, the thoughtful observations expressed about people who influence us. Even in more factual lessons, the spiritual element runs through from beginning to end, supporting the strong Christian ethos of the school.

The leadership and management of the school, as a church school are good.

The school is particularly distinctive as a church school owing to the vision of the headteacher in promoting its Christian foundation as a priority. Parents and governors agree that there is an excellent balance between the academic and religious aspects of the school. The headteacher has worked hard in recent years to improve standards, with notable success. She leads by example and is the 'human' face of education. She is approachable, listens to others and is generous with her time and support. As a result there is a unified atmosphere within the school and a strong sense of community. The senior management team work closely together and are very well supported by the new chair of governors. The governing body has been restructured successfully and governors are learning to challenge and be more rigorous in their roles. Written evaluation of the school's Christian character is under developed. Committees and working groups are, however, very effective in planning for RE, collective worship, and church services. Governors visit the school frequently and informally, providing varied and invaluable support. Staff fully endorse the school's Christian ethos and new members speak warmly of their induction and the help they receive. Parents and pupils appreciate that their views are taken into account. They feel well-informed and believe that the school works hard to achieve the very best for each individual child. Close partnerships with the church and community enrich the life of the school. Pupils participate in local events and competitions, whilst local groups use the school building. The school has close links with the diocese and benefits from training courses and visits from the RE adviser. It regularly takes part in Education Sunday at the cathedral. The priest's familiar presence and prayerful support is greatly valued by the headteacher and staff. Spirituality in the school is palpable because of an understanding of faith that has built up over a period of time and he is instrumental in this development. The professionalism of the leadership team in embracing change and looking to the future ensures that the school has a good capacity to improve further.