



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### St. Pauls' Church of England Academy

Robert Road

Tipton

West Midlands

DY4 9BH

**Previous SIAMS Grade:** Good

**Diocese:** Lichfield

Local authority: Sandwell

Dates of inspection: 11 February 2016

Date of last inspection: 7 January 2011

School's unique reference number: 103988

Principal: Anna McGuire

Inspector's name and number: Revd Alison M. Morris 759

#### School context

St. Paul's Church of England Academy is a one form entry school with 248 pupils. It serves one of the most deprived areas in Tipton with most families in the lowest socio-economic classifications. The Free School Meals percentage is above national average at 37% while 15% pupils have English as an additional language. On entry 72% of pupils are working at below age related expectations while 20% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The school does not link with a parish church due to its closure. As a result developing links have begun with St. Matthew's church community. The school converted to academy status in March 2015.

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

- Astute spiritual and inspirational leadership by the Principal whose vision, motivated by her personal faith, impacts successfully on the multi-faith community the school serves.
- Exemplary pastoral care and intervention strategies that overcome barriers to learning and enable pupils to realise their potential.
- Excellent spiritual growth throughout the school ensures positive attitudes, enjoyment in learning and academic success for virtually all pupils.

#### Areas to improve

- Consolidate and embed the developing links with St. Matthews Parish Church and its community, so that a range of further strategies are established for the future.
- Explore ways to strengthen the already substantial parental links to include deeper understanding of the religious life of this school, its Anglican heritage and the nature of faith.

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

St Paul's has an excellent Christian character and positive ethos which is immediately apparent and permeates every aspect of the academy's life, from documentation and displays through to classroom practice. Explicit Christian values, rooted in biblical teaching, are also embedded in every part of the academy, particularly seen in the exemplary care and excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC). They also underpin and have a positive influence on pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships ensuring that pupils mature spiritually and personally. Pupils are treated with dignity and valued as unique individuals to be fully nurtured in this caring Christian environment. The mission statement reflects the Christian beliefs and teaching which are clearly based upon the teachings and life of Jesus Christ. The text *'We walk by faith and not by sight'* is at the centre of the vision and the values that emanate from this enhance pupil learning. High expectations and aspirations result from a total commitment by all staff to meeting the needs of the whole child. Excellent pupil progress is made and pupils achieve well, most reaching standards of attainment above national average in academic work. The introduction of the Forest School has impacted upon the emotional needs of specific pupils to optimise their learning potential. Effective monitoring of this project is facilitated with the use of 'Boxall profiles' which evaluate sessions. Harmonious staff relationships are a strength of the academy and provide excellent Christian role models. As a result pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. Pupils are keen and eager to attend the academy, because learning is fun, so absence is minimal. They understand what it means to be a pupil at a church academy and make the link to Christian teaching in the bible. One pupil said, *'It teaches us about God and his messages from the bible'*. The School Council and charity fundraising for Birmingham Children's Hospital encourages responsibility, maturity and team work. Pupils from all cultures and faiths feel safe and happy, secure in the knowledge that diversity is embraced and their beliefs are respected and valued. Religious education (RE) makes a very significant contribution to the Christian character and SMSC development. It is given a high priority and is strategically planned within the School Improvement Plan. It also provides a positive, spiritual and affirming experience for reflective learners. Pupils are excited by RE, achieve well and are challenged by learning opportunities. A well-structured thematic RE scheme also fosters deep respect for Christian values and beliefs. Standards of behaviour are exemplary due to a well-disciplined academy which promotes a clear understanding of right and wrong underpinned by Christian values. As a result the academy atmosphere is peaceful and purposeful promoting an excellent environment in which all pupils strive to maximise their learning. Reflective opportunities for pupils are enriched and encouraged through effective '3D' interactive RE displays, bible quotes, prayer tables and artefacts throughout the entire school. These also, so clearly express the academy's Christian distinctiveness and encourage spiritual development.

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

Worship evokes a sense of spiritual gathering with a strong focus on the person of Jesus Christ. Daily worship is inclusive, affirming, and accessible and makes an outstanding impact and contribution to the daily experience of all pupils and staff. Pupils act reverently and enjoy and sing enthusiastically in their response to worship; as one pupil said, *'I love singing to worship my God'*. Visual images, symbols and lighted candles are used to encourage awe and wonder, reflection on belief and prayer. Very good use of props in the worship observed energised pupils' attention and demonstrated how we can go on a spiritual journey through Lent. A creative power point presentation on Lent prepared by pupils added atmosphere to this worship. Worship through its moral messages, encourages pupils to relate their learning to their own behaviour and life, fostering responsibility and respect. They also participate in high profile evaluation of their own behaviour and attitudes through discussion during curriculum activities and 'pupil voice' times. Pupils' behaviour, attitudes and belief are influenced by the Christian distinctiveness of worship. A variety of worship experiences now enable all pupils to

engage with deeper understanding of Anglican traditions and practices to honour their school's Anglican status. Prayer and reflection is integral to daily life and spiritual development. Pupils now have opportunity to plan, lead and evaluate worship either through class worship or through the Worship Committee. Worship is planned thematically following the liturgical calendar with a clear focus on Christian belief, teachings and festivals. Substantial links with the vicar, diocese and foundation governors ensure Christian distinctiveness always has a high profile. Additional activities such as 'Open the Book', 'GR8' (a Christian after school club) and the Tipton Youth Project offer a wider experience of worship. Parents respond positively to invitations to share in weekly worship and special celebrations. Formal evaluation and monitoring of the impact of worship upon pupils by all stakeholders is very effective, so that the high quality of worship offered is relevant to the pupils' lives.

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

The inspirational and dedicated Principal has worked with energy, insight and commitment with the wider leadership team to develop an uncompromising and distinctive Christian vision which is lived out in every detail of this school's life. Christ's teaching is at the heart of everything at St. Paul's. Professional partnerships exist between all staff to embed the vision and create an effective work culture which maximises progress for the pupils. All stakeholders understand and ensure that the distinctive Christian ethos is driven by an over arching vocation and commitment to Christian values. Both chair and foundation governors act as critical friends who are particularly supportive of the strategic drive to sustain the Christian distinctiveness. They ensure effective evaluation of evidence and strategic support to the leadership team. As a result improvement plans fully reflect at every level, monitoring and evaluating the school's progress as a church school, taking account of the school's Anglican foundation. Purposeful and effective systems for monitoring and evaluating the academy's impact on academic achievement are now provided by staff and foundation governors through the Standards and Achievement Committee. Relationships with the Tipton Learning Trust, Parent Association and clergy are extremely strong and very effective in providing strategies to overcome economic and social disadvantage. School evaluation of RE is excellent with very good practice in measuring progress and attainment. Pupil knowledge of the 'Christian story' is excellent as well as understanding and awareness of other faiths and cultures. Experienced leadership by the Principal has contributed significantly to the success of this academy through identified strategic professional development and succession planning. All staff have a very clear understanding of any future developmental needs of this church academy. Governors and staff have training opportunities for leadership roles through partnership with the diocese. Excellent support and in-service training has made a difference to teachers' personal and spiritual development. For example a retreat day on a bi- annual basis is organised by Lichfield diocese. Parents say that the school is very supportive to their requests: issues are dealt with quickly and efficiently. The strong sense of Christian belonging and identity, within which all faiths and cultures are secure, is greatly valued. Parents believe pupils' needs are met and their progress is excellent. They are also very appreciative of the many awards gained such as the Music Mark in 2015. Opportunities for after school enrichment activities are well provided for pupils, including an Art Club. Pupils are encouraged to think globally and be culturally aware of their wider responsibilities within a multi- faith and multi- cultural society through a Black Country Month and Mission Week.

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