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The Methodist Church 

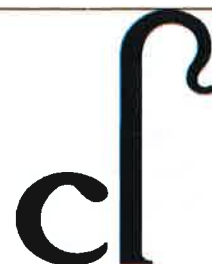
## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### St. Paul's Church of England Junior School

Hawcoat Lane,  
Barrow-in-Furness,  
Cumbria,  
LA14 4HF

**Diocese: Carlisle**

Local authority: Cumbria  
Date of inspection: Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2014  
Date of last inspection: 30<sup>th</sup> November 2009,  
School's unique reference number: 112406  
Headteacher: Mrs. Ruth Webster  
Inspector's name and number: Mrs. Anne B. Woodcock 445



**Diocese of Carlisle  
Growing Disciples**

#### School context

St. Paul's Junior School serves a mixed socio-economic community in Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria. The majority of the 105 pupils are of white British heritage. The number of pupils attracting the pupil premium is low, but the school supports a higher than average number of pupils with special needs. The headteacher has been in post since September 2012. Since the last inspection, when the effectiveness of RE and leadership and management were judged to be inadequate, the school has experienced a monitoring inspection by the diocese at the request of the governors.

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

- Strong, nurturing relationships demonstrate clearly expressed Christian values.
- The headteacher's inspirational Christian vision and leadership has secured a successful and highly motivated staff team whose purpose is the well-being and personal development of the pupils in their care.
- The excellent behaviour and attitude of pupils. They are proud of their school and of all their achievements.
- The effective links with the church and local community which support and enhance children's spiritual and social development.

#### Areas to improve

- Provide regular opportunities for pupils to plan, lead and evaluate acts of worship.
- Support the development of pupils' understanding and use of prayer by providing more opportunities for them to write and use their own prayers, and to learn a wider range of traditional prayers.

- Use local places of worship to extend pupils' understanding and experience of Christian traditions and styles of worship in religious education (RE).

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

Christian values are firmly embedded and encompass all areas of school life. Relationships are extremely strong and supportive. Children say, "We're all tolerant. It doesn't matter who you are or what you look like, we make everyone welcome." Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent. They are eager and confident learners who strive to achieve the targets set for them. Pupils make good progress and standards of achievement are good. All pupils, including those with additional needs, are very well-supported and nurtured, reflecting the school's fully inclusive nature. Children have great respect for and trust in their teachers who, they say, "Make you feel safe, care about us and really listen." Parents are confident that their children are nurtured within a distinctly Christian environment, saying that the implementation of Christian values, together with RE lessons, have a positive effect on their children's moral and social development. Highly effective use is made of the school's outdoor environment to enhance pupils' spiritual development. Regular forest school activities ably support pupils' understanding of the natural world. "We explore, get creative and learn about how to protect our world," explained one pupil. Although the 'prayer shed', developed by pupils during a prayer space week, is only a year old, it is highly valued and well-used. Children are reflective and thoughtful. They are challenged to 'think about big questions' in all areas of the curriculum, and express their opinions freely in an atmosphere of calm and trust. Pupils show knowledge about and respect for diverse cultures and beliefs. They recognise that many people are less fortunate than them, and enjoy raising money for charities such as Children in Need. They explain that helping others is good because they are trying to follow the example of Jesus.

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

Collective worship is a valued and integral feature of the daily life of the school. It is well-planned and is firmly based on Bible teaching, Christian values and festivals. Children's attitudes to worship are very positive. They explain, "It makes you think about how you treat others and it is good to be quiet and have time to think about important things." Children gain a good knowledge of the Bible through the 'Open the Book' worship led by members of local churches. This is supported by the use of Bible reading homework which helps children to make a personal response to the stories. Pupils participate actively in worship, responding to questions, reading and acting out stories. They are engaged in delivering parts of the weekly praise worship. However, they have few opportunities to plan and lead worship independently and this is an area for development. Music plays an important part in daily worship. The children sing with joy and enthusiasm. The vicar and other local clergy are regular and valued leaders of worship, both in school and in church. Events such as 'experience Easter' provide spiritual experiences which develop pupils' understanding. Prayer and reflection are important features of all worship. Pupils are familiar with some traditional prayers, but the school recognises that more needs to be done to develop pupils' personal understanding of the use and purpose of prayer. Collective worship is monitored and evaluated by pupils, staff and governors. Parents value the opportunities provided to share in the weekly praise worship and some special services, such as harvest. Some have been involved in evaluating these events. The importance the school places on worship is reflected in the worship zone area of the school's website.

**The effectiveness of the religious education (RE) is good.**

Very significant developments have resulted in the dramatic improvement of all aspects of RE. The subject leader has ensured that the quality of teaching in RE is good. Pupils enjoy their lessons and have very positive attitudes to their learning. "It's interesting learning about your own and other people's religions," explained one pupil, "you learn more about Jesus and God." Lessons are well-planned, using a variety of approaches which meet the learning needs of all

pupils. For example, in one lesson observed, pupils were reflecting on the meaning of the Good Samaritan parable. Well-differentiated and engaging tasks using a 'bible aid box' encouraged children to discuss challenging questions about friendship and judging others. A good balance is achieved between learning about and learning from religion. Children discuss their opinions freely because, as one pupil explained, "You can't be wrong in RE. Your opinion is listened to and valued." Effective assessment procedures are now embedded. Marking is good. It shows pupils how to improve their work and challenges them to think more deeply. Assessment portfolios reflect the good quality of work. Regular tracking and moderation maintain the focus on pupil progress and achievement. Pupils make good progress from their Year 3 entry baseline levels and the standards achieved are very similar to those achieved in other core subjects. RE makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children talk knowledgeably and with respect about aspects of Islam and Buddhism. They have a very good knowledge of the Bible and they relate the stories to their own moral beliefs. Effective use is made of the church as a resource and there are occasional visits to places of worship, such as to the Buddhist temple. However, greater use should be made of other local places of worship to support pupils' knowledge of different styles of Christian worship.

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

The leadership and management of the school has improved dramatically since the last inspection. Governors recognised the need to strengthen the Christian character of the school and secured this through the headteacher appointment process. The school's Christian character and distinctiveness is secure. The headteacher provides exceptionally strong Christian leadership, based on her personal faith. She has inspired changes which are recognised by all members of the school community and reflected in the school's robust self-evaluation process. Church school issues are clearly identified and prioritised in whole-school planning. The leadership of RE and collective worship have improved significantly and all issues from the last inspections have been fully addressed. The impact of developments over the past two years is profound and palpable. Governors have a clear idea of their role, providing practical support and challenging the work of the school. They monitor collective worship and RE effectively through observations and discussions. Middle leadership roles are well-developed. Effective use is made of diocesan training and support. Pupils are confident that their voice is heard and valued. They welcome the many opportunities given to support the community by, for example, singing in local nursing homes. The strong links with the church actively support pupils' spiritual development. The established links with other local churches and the link with a school in Zambia support children's cultural awareness. Parents are very supportive of the school. Effective communication and the continued use of Bible study homework supports good levels of parental engagement, which is reflected in their attendance at worship events and in their willingness to share opinions through questionnaires and meetings.

SIAMS report October 2014 St. Paul's CE Junior School Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria LA14 4HF