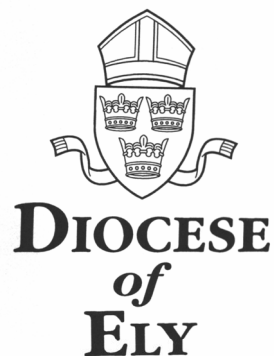


**St Paul's Church of England VA Primary School**

Coronation Street  
Cambridge  
Cambridgeshire  
CB2 1HU

**Diocese: Ely**

Local authority: Cambridgeshire  
Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> May 2008  
Date of last inspection: November 2003  
School's unique reference number: 110839  
Headteacher: Ms Cyndy Fiddy  
Inspector's name and number: Mrs Jan Munt 485



**School context**

St Paul's Church of England School has 211 pupils on roll. It serves a socially advantaged area close to the centre of Cambridge and is within walking distance of the parish church. The proportion of pupils with minority ethnic background is above the national average and a wide range of languages is spoken. There are a few families of other faiths. Pupils' attainment on entry is above average and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is well below average.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Paul's as a Church of England school are good**

A strong Christian ethos informs the values of the school community. This is manifest in supportive and caring relationships and promotes positive attitudes to teaching and learning.

**Established strengths**

- The Christian ethos of the school
- An outstanding RE Co-ordinator
- Good links with the church

**Focus for development**

- Review the spiritual development policy to further identify and develop opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum
- Develop existing processes of observation and evaluation of collective worship to inform future planning
- Develop the role of Foundation Governors to monitor and challenge the school's Christian vision
- Develop teachers' understanding of AT2 in RE

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

Christian values are evident in all aspects of the school's life, particularly in the areas of care and concern. Staff identify and respond to individual pupils' needs. The Headteacher's open door policy and her emphasis on professional guidance mean staff feel involved and appreciated. Pupils' achievements are celebrated in half-termly assemblies and in a display of certificates in the entrance hall as well as in the regular newsletter to parents.

The members of the School Council said that they felt happy to discuss any problems with adults in school and that there is a 'worry box' in the entrance hall where they can leave a note about any concerns which will be dealt with by Ms Fiddy.

The atmosphere around the school is relaxed and orderly and the pupils clearly feel safe and

happy. At the time of the inspection, there were several very good reflective displays around the school, both permanent pictures and posters and work by the pupils. In particular, there was a display about 'Change' in the entrance hall which included some very thoughtful writing on the journey of life by Year 6 pupils. The school is aware, however, of the need to review the spiritual development policy to ensure that the opportunities for spiritual development are maximised, both in the school environment and across the curriculum.

The school is actively involved in the community through its links with the church and particularly through the school's current musical production. It shows a concern for the wider world through its themes for collective worship and related fundraising. At the time of the inspection, pupils were collecting enthusiastically for Christian Aid and this was celebrated in the collective worship.

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

Worship occupies an important place in the life of the school and is a key element in its Christian witness. The planning of collective worship is good but the school does not acknowledge the need to develop and broaden the process for the observation and evaluation of collective worship to ensure its consistent quality and to emphasise its spiritual dimension. Members of the School Council said that they particularly enjoyed the collective worship lead by the vicar, GenR8 and the weekly class assemblies. Several older members, however, said that they felt some acts of worship were directed at the younger pupils. On the day of the inspection, Key Stage One pupils responded very well by answering questions and singing with enthusiasm. Their weekly singing practice raises their understanding and enjoyment of the songs. They clearly enjoyed the worship and they remembered stories and difficult terms like 'Pentecost' from previous acts of worship. There was, however, little opportunity for any reflection. Key Stage Two pupils were less engaged and there was a limited response to questions. There were few opportunities for involvement by the pupils and no visual aids or artefacts employed to hold their attention. The storytelling was good, but the multiplicity of messages lessened its impact.

Worship has a strong Christian focus and the major Christian festivals are celebrated both in school and at church. The vicar of St Paul's leads worship regularly, as do a variety of visitors, including other church members and the United Reformed minister. The school is planning to explore the use of liturgy and response prayers to develop pupils' understanding of Anglican faith and practice.

The school does not meet the statutory requirement for collective worship because not all pupils receive their daily entitlement as some are withdrawn for swimming or cycling lessons.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Religious education has a high profile in school as shown by the very good displays of RE work by the pupils in the classrooms and corridors. The RE Co-ordinator is outstanding and has worked very hard to plan and resource RE. She regularly attends courses run by the Diocese and County and supports her colleagues very well. The quality of teaching and learning is good and plans are in place to expand teachers' understanding of AT2, the aspect of RE that is concerned with pupils' understanding and experience rather than factual knowledge.

In the Key Stage One RE lesson observed, pupils responded well to the Bible story by answering questions and discussing their thoughts with each other. Their contributions showed understanding and they reflected in silence when encouraged by the teacher. The Key Stage Two lesson observed was well-planned and pupils made thoughtful and mature contributions to the discussion. The pupils were not always fully engaged or challenged, however, because of the limited focus on pupils' own experience.

Some members of the School Council felt that the format of RE lessons tended to be the same with some input from the teacher followed by a written exercise. All members agreed that they most enjoyed the lessons which had cross-curricular links and in which they were able to respond through art or drama. The RE Co-ordinator has already worked very hard on establishing assessment procedures for RE but is aware that staff need to develop their use of tasks that enable children to fully demonstrate their knowledge and particularly their understanding.

A small number of parents felt that the school does not keep them well informed about RE but there is evidence that RE issues appear every term in the School Newsletter and there

are plans to include RE work and the RE policy on the school website.

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

The Headteacher and Governors work well together to establish a vision for the school that is both inclusive and true to its Christian foundation. This is fundamental to the school's philosophy and apparent in its ethos, but the school recognises that it could be made more explicit in some areas of school life. For example, the school prayer and the school aims, although present in the classrooms and entrance area, are not prominently displayed and there is no permanent place for a distinctive Christian symbol. The Headteacher and the Governors are aware that the role of the Foundation Governors to monitor and challenge the school needs to be developed in order to emphasise the Christian dimension of school life and to raise its profile as a church school. The school plans to address this issue with the support of the Liaison Officer for the Old School Trust, who has been appointed to discuss the way forward for church schools in Cambridge.

There is a very good relationship between the school and the parish church, founded on the involvement of the vicar, who visits regularly and sits on the Governing Body, and reinforced by the fact that some of the staff and Governors attend the church. Pupils visit the church every half term for services as well as RE lessons and members of the church visit the school to give talks in assembly or help in the classroom. Pupils' work has been displayed in the church and there have been some joint fundraising events.

The school works hard to involve parents in their children's learning through regular newsletters and invitations to special events and celebration and class assemblies. Parents say that they feel welcome at the school and there are a wide variety of clubs for the children which are organised and run by parents.

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