

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Paul's Dorking Church of England Primary School

Vision

Shaping futures, inspiring curiosity.

At St Paul's Church of England Primary School, we follow the example of St Paul (Acts 20:22–24), committing ourselves to helping our community flourish academically, socially and emotionally. We promote curiosity, creativity and high expectations so every child can achieve their full potential. Our strong sense of community ensures staff, pupils and families work together to provide excellent pastoral care and a lifelong love of learning. Guided by our Christian values, we welcome children and families of all faiths and none, creating a respectful, inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and able to thrive.

St Paul's Dorking Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

Notable Strengths

- St Paul's Christian vision is embedded in the life of the school. It inspires the actions of leaders and staff, sustaining a community where people are known and nurtured as unique individuals.
- Collective worship is at the heart of the life of the school. It offers rich and purposeful opportunities to engage with, reflect on and deepen understanding of the school's Christian vision and associated values.
- The Christian vision drives a curriculum that inspires pupils to be curious, embrace challenge and enjoy their learning. Staff champion equality of opportunity and wellbeing, enabling pupils to flourish in their studies.
- Leaders have implemented a thoughtfully planned religious education (RE) curriculum. As a result, pupils are confident and knowledgeable in their understanding of Christianity and a range of religious and non-religious worldviews
- Strong and trusting relationships form the bedrock for flourishing. Pupils are known and understood, which means that their uniqueness is celebrated, and their needs are met. Staff are supported to flourish, both professionally and personally, by leaders and one another.

Development Points

- Develop staff understanding of how spirituality is developed throughout the curriculum. This is to enable the spiritual flourishing of pupils.
- Plan opportunities for pupils to consider their own religious and personal views about different faiths and worldviews, within the RE curriculum. This is to enable them to think critically and deeply.
- Extend opportunities for personal reflection beyond worship and into the wider school environment to support pupils' individual spiritual growth.



Inspection Findings

Vision and Leadership

Leaders at St. Paul's recognise the importance of the school's Christian vision as the heartbeat of the school community. Following consultation with stakeholders the vision has been recently reviewed. As a result, leaders have crafted a clear Christian vision, that feeds into the life and practice of the school. This comes alive through its motto, 'Shaping futures, inspiring curiosity'. The vision is further supported by the six associated values of community, courage, forgiveness, kindness, perseverance and respect. The vision and values resonate with those of the trust and form the basis on which leaders make decisions about the strategic direction of the school. These are closely linked to the life of St Paul and inspire pupils in their daily dialogue and their approach to learning. Values are instilled from the earliest stages and prepare pupils to live well together. Community is more than just a value at St Paul's. It feeds into the way staff and pupils interact and how the school partners with parents and carers, the parish and beyond. Staff are passionate in modelling and embedding the vision into interactions and teaching to help pupils thrive and succeed. Leaders regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the school vision as part of their ongoing monitoring of the school. This results in a determination for the school to be the best Church school it can be.

Vision and Curriculum

The Christian vision shapes a curriculum that is rooted in the context of the community. Leaders, the trust and the local committee are ambitious for pupils. As a result, staff have created a rich and varied curriculum designed to meet the needs of individuals. The curriculum inspires pupils to be curious and strive for excellence. For example, hands-on experiences in science motivate a deeper understanding within investigations. Pupils show resilience in their learning, embracing new challenges with enthusiasm in their academic, creative, and personal development. The school is passionate about the removal of educational barriers and is committed to an inclusive approach. Through a range of teaching methods, staff adapt the curriculum to support those deemed to be vulnerable. Supported by the diocese, the school has established a clear definition of spirituality. Staff, pupils, parents and carers use the language of 'ows, wows and nows' in relation to spontaneous spiritual moments. However, work to identify planned opportunities for spiritual development within the wider curriculum is at an early stage. This restricts capacity for deeper spiritual flourishing in pupils. The trust supports curriculum leaders in their role through training and subject networks. Alongside quality assurance visits, this ensures that the curriculum provides the best opportunities for pupils to learn.

Worship and Spirituality

Collective worship, focused on the vision and values, is a special time that draws the school community together. Systematically planned themes in worship explore the school's vision and values through Bible stories. This inspires pupils and staff to live out the vision, influencing the positive way pupils behave towards each other. In class worship they are challenged to consider 'big questions' and think about recent events from the news. This enables them to engage with the wider world in age-appropriate ways including discussing their ideas with others. A thriving partnership exists between the church and school, resulting in inspirational worship and activities which enrich spiritual development. This is exemplified in the recent Easter 'pause day' which helped pupils gain a deeper understanding of the suffering of Jesus. The wider church congregation also benefits from pupil contributions, such as through singing at parish events. Support from the diocese and trust fosters reflection on Bible stories and their deeper meaning. However, opportunities for spiritual reflection beyond worship and into the wider school environment are limited. The pupil faith team, supported by leaders and clergy, are involved in planning and leading worship. They gain great personal value from this role. This is clearly demonstrated in their excitement in helping the headteacher launch the refreshed vision to the school.



Vision and School Culture

Relationships are central to the life of the school and a practical outworking of the vision and values. For example, a restorative approach to behaviour prioritises forgiveness and reconciliation, enabling pupils to reflect on actions and repair relationships. One pupil remarked, 'We are not a school, we are one big family'. Pupils recognise the way adults support them to persevere when things are difficult. They know that when they make mistakes, they can follow the example of St Paul and turn things around. Opportunities such as a gardening club and quiet club are examples of the school supporting pupils. This helps pupils regulate their emotions and provides a structure during social periods such as lunch and break times. In this way their wellbeing is effectively supported. The values of kindness and compassion extend beyond school with parents and carers reporting that these values often feature in conversations at home. Reflecting the high priority placed on wellbeing by leaders and the local committee, staff value the strong supportive leadership of the school. They particularly appreciate the efforts made to support their workload and the compassion they are shown in times of difficulty.

Vision, Justice and Responsibility

Pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of justice and responsibility, shaped by the school's Christian vision and values. Leadership opportunities, such as the faith team and school council, enable pupils to make meaningful contributions to school life. They are inspired to be good role models, serve others and their community by suggesting actions they can take. This includes a walk for solidarity with refugees, litter picking in the community and raising funds for various causes. Pupils gain a living connection to their local community through a strong partnership with the work of the parish. For example, pupils have visited the local foodbank and regularly sing at local nursing homes. This helps pupils make positive contributions to the community and experience making a difference.

Religious Education

Leaders have carefully considered the design and balance of the RE curriculum. It is systematically planned to ensure coverage and progression and the subject has a high profile in the school. Using questions as the starting point for learning, helps pupils to see the relevance of their learning in RE. The subject leader supports staff, providing training and resources to deepen subject knowledge and develop practice. However, opportunities to use specific skills for study and interpretation in RE have not been incorporated into the curriculum. This limits development of critical thinking and restricts deeper engagement with key concepts. Leaders and staff benefit from high quality professional development from the diocese and trust. This enables them to understand how pupils learn best and what pupils think about the beliefs of others. Pupils recognise that RE helps them to understand other people and their beliefs. One pupil remarked that it, 'helps us to respect religions and one another'. In this way RE helps pupils be prepared for life in a multicultural society. Pupils and staff from faith backgrounds have been a living resource to enrich the RE curriculum.

The subject leader and local committee ensure that teaching and learning in RE is good, leading to pupils making good progress. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about their lessons, making pertinent links between religions and non-religious worldviews. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and deliver lessons that are engaging and adapted to meet the needs of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Effective assessment processes track progress and inform future planning, leading to targeted teaching and improved outcomes. Pupils value feedback from teachers and recognise that it helps them develop as learners.

Information

Address	St Paul's Road East, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 2HS		
Date	25 March 2026	URN	151288
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	398
Diocese	Guildford		
MAT	Good Shepherd Trust		
MAT Chair	Yvonne McCleod		
Headteacher	Gary Papworth		
Chair of Local Board	Jane Treharne		
Inspector	Andrew Jervis		