

**St Albans Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

St Albans Road  
West Leigh  
Havant  
PO9 2JX

<b>Diocese:</b>	<b>Portsmouth</b>
Local authority:	Hampshire
Dates of inspection	27 February 2013
Date of last inspection:	19 June 2007
School's unique reference number:	116362
Headteacher:	Alice Wood
Inspector's name and number:	Andrew Rickett [201]

**School context**

St Albans is an average size primary school with 220 children on roll. It serves the local deanery and takes children from a wide diversity of social and economic backgrounds. The majority of children have a white British heritage. The number of children with special educational needs and/or difficulties is broadly in line with the national average. Attainment on entry to the school is slightly below the local authority average.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Albans as a Church of England school are outstanding.**

There is a very special quality to the distinctiveness of St Albans as a church school. This quality is the living out of Christian values through the opportunities to explore spirituality. This makes a significant impact to the childrens' well-being and also makes a major contribution to their learning through the encouragement of children to explore difficult concepts at considerable depth.

**Established strengths**

- The quality of opportunities for children to develop a personal spirituality.
- The extent to which relationships in the school are based on Christian teaching.
- The passion and commitment of the headteacher, her staff and governors, in promoting the school's Christian mission.

**Focus for development**

- Develop assessment of religious education (RE) so that it tracks pupil progress and informs future improvements in teaching and learning.
- Ensure that the collective worship policy identifies procedures to monitor and evaluate its impact on the lives of members of the school community.

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

An exceptional aspect of the school's distinctive Christian character is the extent to which children have opportunities to and are encouraged to reflect on Christian teaching: to look within themselves and to look at their relationships with others. This is particularly successful through the school's approach to spirituality where children are challenged in their understanding of difficult abstract concepts and how they affect the way they lead their lives. This is an aspect of school that is evident throughout its everyday life. For example, each

class has a spiritual table which provides the stimulus for children to express their thoughts and ideas on issues such as their response to prayer. In one class, children showed considerable maturity in the way that they responded to how spring made them feel. Other examples observed were opportunities for children to explore concepts such as freedom, remembrance and forgiveness all of which were set within the context Christian teaching. Children respond very well to these opportunities and talk freely and comfortably about matters of faith and belief. Moreover, this approach contributes to the children's learning as it encourages them to explore a deeper meaning through the acquisition of a language through which they can express themselves at a sophisticated level. Through this approach, Christian values are not just taught but are lived out in the life of the school. Teachers are skilled in questioning children who respond with eagerness and excitement. This creates a classroom environment in which children want to learn. Very good use is made of the school environment to promote the church school ethos. There are clear displays around the school that celebrate the Christian ethos and each class has an RE display that relates to the current topic. The creation of a prayer garden since the previous inspection is an example of how the outside environment is increasingly being used to celebrate the Christian character. Children say that this garden helps them to be quiet and reflect and that it can help them to be calm if they get angry.

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

Acts of worship are outstanding because of the contribution they make to the children's growing spiritual awareness and the extent to which worship themes encourage children to live out the school's Christian vision. Children are very clear that collective worship is one of the most important ways through which the school expresses its Christian character and that it is through the messages they hear that they learn about Jesus and how He taught us. For example, one child spoke of the need to treat each other as we would want to be treated because 'Jesus taught us to love our neighbour'. There is a high expectation that acts of worship will provide opportunities to challenge the children's understanding of Christian teaching. This was seen in the worship observed during the inspection when a group of Year 6 children planned and led the whole school through an exploration of what a sacred place means to them. When spoken to, children have a very good understanding of the difference between a place that may be special and one that is sacred. Collective worship is thoroughly planned with a three year programme that is rooted in Christian teaching. There is a clear focus on Bible stories that relate to the children's own lives as well as opportunities to celebrate major Christian festivals of which children have an excellent understanding. Prayer is an important part of each act of worship and pervades the general life of the school too. Prayers are said at lunch time and at the end of the school day and children have further opportunities to pray through the prayer box. Children have a mature understanding of prayer. For example, one group of children explained that it doesn't matter when or how you pray because 'God will always hear you – even if you are not a Christian'. Attitudes towards collective worship are very positive and children respond with enthusiasm and joy. Regular evaluations of collective worship ensure that the school's leaders receive feedback from the children and this can lead to change.

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

Religious education (RE) is outstanding because of the contribution the subject makes to the development of the children's spirituality and the extent to which it promotes the school's Christian ethos. Children are encouraged to explore religious concepts in considerable depth and apply their excellent knowledge of RE to develop their understanding of what they learn from their studies. This was seen in the lessons observed during the inspection when outstanding teaching challenged the children's ideas and views with teachers setting high expectations of the quality of response and engagement from the children. Children rise to these challenges and show very positive attitudes towards the subject. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, children were animated and clearly relished the opportunity to share their ideas on what it means to be free. Similarly, in a Year 2 lesson, children were challenged to explore bereavement and what that means. It is this confidence from teachers and children to tackle challenging and difficult concepts that makes RE the exciting subject that it is in the school curriculum. Overall achievement in religious education is good with the majority of

children exceeding national expectations in RE by the time they leave the school in Year 6. When low starting points are taken into consideration, children make good progress to attain current standards. Regular moderation of RE assessments enables teachers to accurately identify children's attainment although pupil achievement is not currently levelled against national expectations and therefore does not track individual progress. The school is aware that this is an area that needs to be developed.

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

The headteacher has an exceptionally clear understanding of the purpose of being a church school and has successfully articulated her vision to all members of the school community. She is passionate about the difference that an education based on a Christian ethos can make to the lives of children and their families. Her commitment is shared by her staff and the governing body who have a very good grasp of the impact of the Christian distinctiveness on the everyday life of the school. Governors have this accurate understanding of the effect of the Christian ethos because there are some excellent formal procedures in place for them to monitor and evaluate its impact. For example, the school council has attended governor meetings where children have had the opportunity to talk with governors on collective worship and have given their thoughts on prayer. Governors have also observed acts of worship in a formal way and reported their evaluations to the governing body. The RE leader is outstanding in maintaining the high profile of the subject within the school curriculum. She has accurately identified areas to further develop RE through a comprehensive subject management plan that ensures that RE teaching and learning is up to date. The link governor for RE is also closely involved in monitoring the progress of this management plan. Moreover, she has an excellent understanding of the place of RE within the life of the school and the contribution it makes to the children's spiritual development. Links with local parish church are very strong. The commitment to these links was evident during the long period when there wasn't a vicar when both school and church maintained a close relationship and ensured that there was a church presence in the school. The recently appointed vicar is rapidly making an impact on the school community. Parents feel that the school's Christian ethos 'spills over' into everyday life and that it has an effect on their children and their families. In particular, parents spoken to during the inspection value the empathetic way that the school brings children to faith in an inclusive way so that children, and their families, are comfortable to talk about matters of faith and belief. As one parent said, 'the school encourages children to look at themselves and explore their emotions and the effect they have on others'.

SIAS report February 2013, St Albans CE VA Primary School, Havant PO9 2JX



## Judgement Recording Form (NSJRF)

*This form is to be attached to the main SIAS report and returned to the diocese in which the school is situated and to the National Society.*

Name of school: St Albans CE VA Primary School  
 Address of School: St Albans Road, West Leigh, Havant, Hampshire PO9 2JX  
 School URN: 116362  
 Date of inspection: 27 February 2013  
 NS Inspector's Number: 201  
 Type of Church school: Voluntary Aided  
 Number of pupils: 220  
 Phase of education: Primary

**Has Diocesan Quality Assurance been obtained for this report?** Yes  
*(delete appropriate word)*

**Rating 1-4**

How distinctive and effective is the school as a Church school?	<b>1</b>
How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?	<b>1</b>
What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?	<b>1</b>
How effective is the religious education?	<b>1</b>
How effective are the leadership and management of the school, as a church school?	<b>1</b>
The school meets the statutory requirement for collective acts of worship	<b>Yes</b>
The school meets the statutory requirement for religious education *	<b>Yes</b>

\* *Voluntary Aided Schools (delete appropriate word)*



The school meets the statutory requirements for Collective Worship		<b>Yes</b>
The school meets the statutory requirements for Religious Education		<b>Yes</b>
		<b>Grade</b>
<b>The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Charter Academy as a Church of England school.</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?</b>	<b>1</b>
1a	How well do the school's Christian values have an impact on all learners and enable them to flourish as individuals?	<b>1</b>
1b	How well does the Christian character support the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of all learners whether they are Christian, of other faiths, or of none?	<b>1</b>
1c	How well does the Christian character of the school prepare learners to become responsible citizens?	<b>1</b>
1d	How well do key Christian values motivate the relationships between all members of the school community?	<b>1</b>
1e	How well is the spiritual development of learners enhanced by the school environment?	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>What is the impact of Collective Worship on the school?</b>	<b>1</b>
2a	How positive are learners' attitudes to collective worship?	<b>1</b>
2b	To what extent do learners and staff derive inspiration, spiritual growth and affirmation from worship?	<b>1</b>
2c	How well does collective worship develop learners' understanding of Anglican traditions and practice?	<b>1</b>
2d	How effectively is the importance of worship demonstrated in the life of the school?	<b>1</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>How effective is the Religious Education provided by the school?</b>	<b>1</b>
3a	How high are the standards and how well do all learners achieve in RE? <i>(Aided schools only)</i>	<b>1</b>
3b	How effective are learning and teaching in RE? <i>(Aided schools only)</i>	<b>1</b>
3c	To what extent do learners of all faiths and of none demonstrate a positive attitude towards RE?	<b>1</b>
3d	How well does RE contribute to the spiritual and moral development of all learners?	<b>1</b>
3e	To what extent does RE promote the distinctive Christian character of the school?	<b>1</b>
3f	To what extent does RE promote community cohesion through an understanding of and respect for diverse faith communities?	<b>2</b>
3g	How effectively is the importance of RE demonstrated in the life of the school?	<b>1</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?</b>	<b>1</b>
4a	How well has the school leadership (including governors) engaged with distinctive Christian values in developing their vision for the school?	<b>1</b>
4b	How well is this vision understood by all stakeholders?	<b>1</b>
4c	How well do leaders and governors ensure that this vision is put into practice by all members of the school community?	<b>1</b>
4d	How well are leaders and governors preparing for the future leadership of church schools?	<b>1</b>
4e	How effective is the partnership between the school, the church and the wider community, including the parents?	<b>1</b>