



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Jude and St Paul's Church of England Primary School

10 Kingsbury Road
Islington
London
NI 4AZ

Previous SIAMS grade: good

Diocese: London

Local authority: Islington

Dates of inspection: 9 February 2015

Date of last inspection: July 2010

School's unique reference number: 100442

Headteacher: Revd John Hicks

Inspector's name and number: John Viner 144

School context

St Jude and St Paul's CE School is a one-form entry primary school located in Dalston, in the London Borough of Islington and serving the parish of St Jude and St Paul Mildmay Grove. Its 199 pupils reflect the rich diversity of the local area. A higher than average proportion of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds and speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above average. Around a fifth of pupils attend church regularly. Following a decline, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are now higher than national averages. The present Head Teacher is an interim appointment.

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

- The decisive, Christian leadership of the interim Head Teacher is recognised by the whole school community and is playing a key role in the school's further development as a Church school.
- The recent focus on Christian values has ensured that the school's distinctive Christian character underpins its life and is evident in every aspect of its work.
- Collective worship is regular, well-structured and affirms all who attend, regardless of their faith or belief.
- The purposeful partnership of leaders and governors is driving the school's rapid improvement.

Areas to improve

- Review the school's mission statement so that it better reflects its Christian and Anglican character.
- Expand the opportunities for prayer at key points of the day.
- Review the Religious Education (RE) curriculum and the way that it is taught so that pupils learn more deeply across an appropriate range of faiths.
- Strengthen the relationship with the parish church so that it is of mutual benefit to the school and parish.

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

This is a school where pupils' personal development and academic progress are well-served by its distinctively Christian character. A recent focus on specific Christian values has placed them at the centre of the school's life. Because they are made explicit in school and in the regular newsletters, pupils remember them and parents report that they understand them. Although its stated mission does not make it clear, the school's Christian distinctiveness provides the underlying basis for its work and underpin the very good relationships between and among pupils and adults. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school where they behave very well, work hard and make good progress, achieving improving standards. Regardless of their faith or background, pupils benefit from the school's Christian character through good promotion of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This leads to an understanding of and respect for diversity that both pupils and staff recognise as a sense of 'family'. RE is treated with the importance expected in a Church school and so makes a positive impact on the Christian character of the school. It contributes to the success that the school is having in developing pupils' sense of spirituality and their interest in deep questions. The classroom RE displays remind pupils of its importance and provide opportunities for them to think and reflect.

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

Collective worship is central to the life of the school and pupils recognise that this is why it takes place every day. Worship has a strong Biblical base and good use is made of Anglican responses. Pupils say that they find it a helpful way to think about the Christian values that the school promotes and that it deepens their understanding of Jesus and of the Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils enjoy worship, particularly when they have opportunities to take part. They participate enthusiastically and sing tunefully but they also value the quiet reflective times, which encourage them to think deeply. One pupil summed up the experience as 'it makes me feel alive inside'. All who attend worship are affirmed by it, whether adults or pupils, regardless of faith or belief. They say that worship strengthens their faith. The opportunities for prayer help pupils to learn something of its importance and, although there are no lunchtime or end-of-school prayers, there are good opportunities for them to reflect and respond personally. These include times when pupils write prayers for use in worship, in response to classroom reflection areas and through the prayer tree, which stands in the main corridor and which parents also use. Worship is carefully planned and structured around the Church's year. Clear guidance is given so that all who lead it ensure that it is of a good standard. The incumbent regularly attends worship and leads prayers. Although formal evaluation of worship is not yet embedded, pupils' views are sought and governors are increasingly and actively involved in its ongoing review. Parents say that they like to be able to take part in worship and welcome the opportunities they have to attend school services on the few occasions that they are held in the church.

The effectiveness of the religious education requires improvement

Standards in RE are roughly in line with, but no higher than, those in other core subjects in the school. Although RE is given the status of a core subject, the areas for development identified in the last inspection have not been sufficiently followed up. Because there are also other areas of weakness, RE requires improvement. Teachers have only recently taken on responsibility for regularly teaching RE and, although they teach capably, they do not all have enough specialist subject knowledge. Instead they rely on their skills in teaching philosophy so that specific learning about religion is weak. Although assessment is now more frequent than at the time of the last inspection, the work that is set, and the written feedback pupils receive, is too often limited to the development of their literacy skills and is often at a low level. This is why pupils say that, although they like RE, they do not learn enough about it and why some parents question the amount of RE being taught. Pupils develop a sound foundation of Christianity and a positive impact of teachers' skills in promoting thinking is that some of their responses are of a good depth. The RE curriculum covers a wide range of faiths as well as Christianity but these are not well balanced. This leads to a superficial coverage of other faiths. As a result, pupils do not securely know the key facts about religion they might be expected to know. The headteacher is well-supported by diocesan officers and has assumed the leadership of RE. He has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and is working with governors to address them. Governors are aware that leadership of RE is fragile and are working with the headteacher to monitor its effectiveness and plan its ongoing development.

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

The interim headteacher provides strong, purposeful Christian leadership, which staff say is inspirational. Since his appointment, leaders and governors have given much thought to the school's development and now they share and articulate an explicit Christian vision, strongly based on distinctly Christian values. This is having a positive impact on raising the standards achieved by pupils, on their personal development and wellbeing and on the Christian character of the school. Leaders and governors have ensured that both RE and collective worship now meet statutory requirements and are part of the school's Christian distinctiveness. Through careful strategic planning, governors are working with the Interim Headteacher and key staff to implement an ambitious development plan, based on their thorough evaluation of the school's character and performance. They have a good understanding of the school's future leadership needs and these lie at the centre of their plans. The school is part of a community of church schools in the borough and takes part in a variety of church and faith-based events. There is a positive relationship with the parish church but it is not yet developed enough to have the kind of impact that would be of mutual benefit to the school, its pupils and their families. Parents say that the church seems to have less input than they might expect. However, foundation governors are well aware of this and actively seeking a way forward. Parents and staff are enthusiastic about the school. They have great faith in the headteacher: they respect him, trust his judgements and welcome the renewed focus on the school's Christian and Anglican identity.

SIAMS report February 2014 St Jude and St Paul's CE Primary School, Islington NI 4AZ