



St John's Upper Holloway Church of England Primary School



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools

Inspection Report

School address	Pemberton Gardens London N19 5RR
Headteacher	Mr Brian Welsh
Type of School	Primary
Status	Voluntary Aided
Unique Reference Number	100439
Diocese	London
Local Authority	London Borough of Islington
Date of last inspection	December 2008

Inspection date	28 th March 2012
National Society Inspector	Gladys Vendy (NS 299)

The Education Act 2005 (Section 48) requires the governing body or foundation governors of Church of England Schools to appoint a person to undertake the inspection of denominational education and collective worship in schools with a religious character.

Context

St John's Upper Holloway is an attractive one form entry school with a nursery class. The school is in the parish of St John's Upper Holloway which forms part of a team ministry with St Andrew's, Whitehall Park and St Mary's, Hornsey Rise. The school is situated in a densely populated area and serves one of the most deprived socio economic communities in the country. Three quarters of the children are from minority ethnic backgrounds the largest being of Black British, Black African or Black Caribbean heritage. The number of children who speak English as an additional language is well above average as are those who are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or learning disabilities is also above average. Children enter school with skill levels well below those expected for their age but pupil data shows they make good progress and levels of attainment are broadly average and rising by the end of Key Stage Two. Pupil mobility is high. There has been a considerable change of teaching staff, including the Senior Leadership Team in the last two years.

A significant number of pupils are from practising Christian families. All the main world faiths are represented.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St John's Upper Holloway Church of England School are outstanding.

The Head Teacher's clear vision of the school as a church school, supported by the church ministry team, has been shared with all groups in the school community. This has given impetus to the re-establishment of the school as a distinctive and effective church school. The school values all members of its community and makes very good provision for social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

Established strengths

- The Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher work closely together supported by the staff of the Team Ministry to promote the Christian ethos of the school which impacts upon the very good relationships between all groups.
- The understanding of the importance of prayer and collective worship in the spiritual and moral development of all groups in the school community.
- The leadership skills of the Collective Worship and Religious Education (RE) co-ordinator and the effect this has had on raising the quality of teaching and learning.

Focus for development

- Plan a programme of visits and visitors to support the teaching and learning about other faith communities.
- Implement a clear system for the assessment of Religious Education.

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

The school has undergone considerable change in the last two years because the development of a clear Christian vision by the Senior Leadership Team has been shared by all groups. This is reflected in the visibility of many Christian symbols such as the prayer tree in the foyer and designated areas for displays and reflection in classrooms. Communication is very good and a notice board for the church and community sits alongside boards for The Friends and information for parents. The strong emphasis on Christian values are firmly embedded and understood by everyone. Christian principles are reflected through 'Golden Rules' and contribute to the high standard of pupils' behaviour. Relationships are strong and there are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility such as through playground friends, peer mediation or reading buddies. Older children are encouraged to take care of the younger ones. The school council chose to make playtimes its priority which has resulted in an attractive environment including a newly developed quiet area with a mosaic showing Christian symbols in the playground that contributes to the pupils' spiritual development. Emphasis is placed on being an inclusive school that serves the local community, celebrates the diversity of pupils' backgrounds and develops positive relationships. The move towards a more creative curriculum enables all children to develop their skills. Themed

weeks often include activities that link with the school ethos, such as the Christian Aid trading game to raise awareness of the inequality of wealth, which was a highpoint of the mathematics week. Philosophy for children has played a large part in underpinning Christian values and helps children to explore the big issues such as 'where does life come from' to which a child had answered 'life is in your heart'. Stringent tracking procedures identify the needs of all children. Provision is made for the gifted and talented through extension activities. The inclusion leader effectively offers care, guidance and pastoral support especially for the vulnerable. Intervention strategies are put in place where needed and progress is regularly reviewed. One parent said 'the school makes a concerted effort for pupils with disabilities'. Standards of attainment are good. Breakfast and the after school 'Buzz' club provide good child care and offer a wide range of opportunities for social and cultural development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The comprehensive worship policy outlines the centrality of worship in the life of the school. Worship is exceptionally well planned between the subject leader and the team ministry and themes reflect the Christian year. The display in the foyer relates specifically to the theme for the term. Worship which is led by staff and clergy follows a liturgical structure, is cohesive and impacts positively upon everyone's spiritual and moral development. The school attends services in St John's Church to celebrate the major Christian festivals and these are attended by all the clergy in the team ministry as well as parents and governors. Year Six children are presented with a copy of The Bible at a special leaver's service. The school keeps good records of worship. Foundation Stage children increase their attendance during the year and are supported by Year Six monitors. The altar table in the hall reflects the liturgical colours of the year which the children understand and also has a cross and candle. In the observed act of worship pupils came in silently to music. Children responded well to questions about the meaning of the cross and the crucifixion. Children gave examples of showing off and betrayal when they were asked to reflect on 'naughty things'. One child said 'God forgives every time'. The use of Powerpoint engaged the children's attention and helped their understanding. Children sang enthusiastically accompanied by actions. The modern version of the Lord's Prayer is said daily. Children say they enjoy worship and taking part in readings, prayers and drama. The Vicar conscientiously undertakes an effective pastoral role within the school community supporting those of all faiths and none and is a familiar presence in the school. On Monday he leads a weekly prayer group of parents. One mum said it makes a 'positive start to the week'. Children know that prayers they have written on egg shaped card - 'prayer eggs' - are taken from the prayer box or prayer tree and used in school, laid on the church altar and kept by the vicar. One child said prayer is 'talking to Jesus like talking to a friend on your mobile'. Children enjoy writing or choosing prayers for Key Stage worship. Worship and RE are reported to the Governing Body through presentations by the subject leader. The link Worship and RE governor reports back at both committee level and full Governing Body meetings.

The effectiveness of Religious Education is good

Religious Education is considered to be a core subject and is given a high profile in the curriculum. The subject leader is knowledgeable, committed and passionate about the subject and leads by example. RE is properly timetabled, budgeted and resourced. A very clear action plan for worship and RE has as its primary focus improving the quality of both areas and is well annotated. The Diocesan scheme of work has recently been introduced and is augmented by the Solihull scheme. Teaching about other faiths is usually from a comparative approach and builds upon those faiths represented in their classrooms. The school has not yet established a regular programme of visits and visitors to support this area of learning. Monitoring of RE through planning, work scrutiny and classroom observations gives positive and constructive feedback. There are good examples of the recording of non-written work through captioned photographs and lesson summaries and comments but this is inconsistent across the school. In one class, voice recordings were transcribed to create booklets of conversations about the big question 'is God always with you?' Occasionally an overuse of worksheets limits creativity. Good links are made with other subjects such as history and science as when older juniors looked at Saul's 'Damascus experience' in the light of Hitler and irreversible changes. The clergy reinforce a cross curricular approach such as leading an assembly on Saint Luke during science week. A clear lesson format which always identifies key religious vocabulary and questions gives teachers good support. It helps them to focus on the attainment targets of learning about and learning from religion and to engage with Biblical teaching. Higher order questioning challenged and developed children's thinking skills –

'can a bully change'? Resources were varied and well used. Nursery children were able to identify the symbol of the cross on the hot cross bun and understood that the sad story became a happy one. Junior children experienced a Seder meal displaying very good prior knowledge by relating it to the Passover and to the Last Supper and showed they could explore their thoughts and ideas about the event. RE displays are sometimes used as working walls as in the display about the Easter journey. ICT was well used to support children's learning with a range of video clips, paintings and a visualiser. In all lessons a candle was lit and there were good opportunities for reflection. Children said the candle helps them to be calm. Children showed very good ability to empathise developing their spiritual and moral understanding. The quality of teaching and learning observed was always at least good. Standards of attainment in RE are in line with other core subjects but progress is good. Capacity for improvement is very good. Formal assessment has not been fully developed although criteria for success is identified in lessons and pupils can self and peer evaluate.

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

The Head Teacher has a strong and clear Christian vision for the school and is committed to raising the effectiveness and quality of teaching. Sound Christian values are promoted and shared with the entire community. As excellent role models the Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher together with the clergy team make a significant contribution to the strength of the school as a church school. Regular in service training is given for RE and collective worship. Teaching assistants are valued, given good training and contribute positively to children's progress. Governors are linked to year groups as well as curriculum subjects. Foundation Governors are represented on all governor committees and contribute well to the strength of the school. Open days are planned for governors and have a specific focus so that they are able to acquire a deeper understanding of the school's priorities. They are then able to report their findings to the full Governing Body meeting. High staff morale, team work and excellent relationships between all groups create a safe and secure community that exemplifies the strong Christian foundation. Recruitment of staff has a firm Christian base. Very good induction procedures welcome and inform new pupils, staff, parents and governors. Parents and children new to the Foundation Stage are introduced to the Vicar at the start of term meeting. The school has an active Friends' Association who make a significant contribution by organising events for children and families. The school receives very good support from the Diocese. The school and church are mutually supportive. The school has good links with local businesses and shops and a well deserved reputation in the community as an effective and distinctive church school. The capacity for further improvement is very good.

March 2012 SIAS Report St John's Upper Holloway Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School Pemberton Gardens, London, N19 5RR



Judgement Recording Form (NSJRF)



Name of School: St John's Upper Holloway Church of England Primary School
Pemberton Gardens, London, N19 5RR

Date of inspection: 28th March 2012
Type of Church school: Voluntary Aided
Phase of education: Primary
Number of pupils: 218
URN Number: 100439
NS Inspector's Number: 299

Rating 1-4

How distinctive and effective is the school as a Church school?	1
How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?	1
What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?	1
How effective is the religious education?	2
How effective are the leadership and management of the school, as a church school?	1
The school meets the statutory requirement for collective acts of worship	Yes
The school meets the statutory requirement for religious education *	Yes

* Voluntary Aided Schools