



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St. Barnabas Church of England Primary School

St. Barnabas Street
London
SW1W 8PF

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: London

Local authority: Westminster

Dates of inspection: 29 June 2016

Date of last inspection: 28 March 2011

School's unique reference number: 101126

Headteacher: Ann Townshend

Inspector's name and number: Allan McLean NS823

School context

St Barnabas is a smaller than average primary school that serves pupils from a wide variety of minority ethnic groups. It has retained a fairly stable senior leadership and governance team since the last inspection. A large majority of the pupils speak English as an additional language. The number of disadvantaged pupils is significantly above the national average. The school established a new nursery class in September 2015. The school was inspected by Ofsted in January 2013 and received an overall effectiveness grade of 'Good'. A new 'Priest in Charge' was appointed in October 2015 at St. Barnabas church.

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

- Christian values shape, support and sustain the academic achievement, personal development and well-being of all pupils
- Relationships at all levels are informed by Christian values and guarantee a high level of pastoral support for all members of the school community
- The close knit relationship with the parish church ensures daily collective worship is of central importance to the life of the school
- The creative and challenging Religious Education (RE) enables and encourages pupils to think deeply about issues of concern

Areas to improve

- Ensure the rapid progress pupils make in RE is maintained so that a significant number continue to attain higher than national expectations
- During the process of revising the RE scheme of work consider how clear links can be made to the school's Christian values

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

The school's mission statement, 'Living, working and growing together in the love of God' shapes the thinking and determines the priorities and ethos of the school. Explicit Christian values based on the fruits of the spirit permeate every aspect of school life and this creates an ethos that enables pupils to achieve academic standards and progress that are often above national expectations. The school's Christian values are clearly displayed in every classroom. As one child expressed, 'Our values reflect everything we do in school and guide us in how to behave towards each other.' These Christian values are central to the school because they inform all decisions about policy and practice and particularly the very strong relationships between all members of the school community. All those involved in the school communicate high expectations and aspirations for every child in a community where levels of deprivation are higher than the national norm. This is seen both in the academic achievement of pupils, and in their preparation as life long learners. Opportunities provided for pupils' spiritual development is excellent. Pupils respond with sensitivity and maturity to collective worship. Themes explored in collective worship are followed through during RE. Each classroom has a clear area for religious education that reflects the theme being studied. The relationships between all members of the school community are excellent. At the heart of these relationships are the schools Christian values of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Pupils are able to make clear links between these values and the choices they make. The RE curriculum, together with the daily act of worship, ensures that pupils understand the roots of the values within the Christian faith. RE plays an important role in its contribution to the Christian character of the school whilst also providing opportunities to discuss the similarities and differences between the different faiths represented within this diverse school community. Parents of different faiths value this and describe the school as 'the most inclusive Church of England school that makes everyone feel welcome'. Pupils have an excellent knowledge of the Christian faith that makes a significant contribution to their moral and social development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Pupils recognise that distinctively Christian worship is at the heart of St. Barnabas. Pupils now attend St. Barnabas church every day for collective worship. They readily describe how it underpins all that the school does and reinforces their knowledge and understanding of the place of Jesus within the Christian faith. They also describe how certain themes guide them in their own lives. Pupils comment on how several stories told during collective worship have led them to evaluate their own behaviour. They discuss the importance of forgiveness and the importance of 'not carrying things from the past with you'. Older pupils confidently relate stories of justice in the Bible to modern day news stories. Collective worship is very well planned and responds to careful evaluation through consultation with the school community and particularly the school parliament. This has resulted in children taking an active leadership role during collective worship. Leaders ensure that worship covers a broad range of Christian themes with a strong emphasis on the school's Christian values and on important Christian festivals. This enables pupils to have a very good understanding of the nature of worship, the Christian faith and Anglican traditions and practice. Pupils speak very positively about the impact of special services such as Easter. They were able to sum up what the story of Easter is about by quoting a hymn with the words 'Taking my guilt, my shame, rising again I bless your name'. All members of staff attend collective worship, and frequently parents, thus reinforcing its importance to the whole community. Worship is led by clergy, teachers and pupils. The decision to move collective worship into church each day provides a very special bond between the church and the school and provides a reflective setting which ensures that worship is a spiritual experience of real significance. Prayer and reflection corners are established in all classrooms and pupils are provided with regular opportunities for personal and public prayers throughout the school day. The school has strong links to many charities around the globe and pupils are clear on the importance of charity work.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Planning in RE is excellent. Careful consideration is always given to both learning about and learning from religion. Standards are generally above national expectations and are improving rapidly due to the excellent progress being made. The school needs to maintain this progress so that a significant number continue to attain higher than national expectations. Pupils are able to apply their strong subject knowledge to a wide range of circumstances. Techniques gained through a 'philosophy for children' approach provides pupils with the skills to address the 'big questions'. Teachers are not afraid to take risks in presenting challenges to the pupils. In one lesson the children were exploring 'Is it possible to always control our futures and should we put our trust in monetary things?' The impact of teaching over time was evident in the pupils having been well equipped with appropriate and sensitive language to explore open-ended questions. Pupils make excellent progress within lessons. The quality of teaching is consistently good and often outstanding. Pupils comment that 'RE will help us in the future – it is really important to understand people from different cultures and backgrounds'. Conversations with pupils illustrate the impact of this teaching and the 'deep learning' that is taking place. Pupils appreciate the time taken by teachers to write reflective comments and questions in response to their work. This enables them to know how to improve their work or to respond with deeper thinking. There has been clear and robust work carried out on developing a new and consistent assessment system which is being used to support learning and progress. Moderation work has been carried out with another local church school to assess standards. The governors have adopted the diocesan syllabus and the senior leadership has attended diocesan training on the new syllabus, drawing up clear plans for implementation. They would benefit now from considering how links can be made between the school's Christian values and the new RE syllabus. The presentation and standard of work in RE books is of high quality and at least comparable with that of other core subjects. The leadership team has implemented a thorough approach for reporting to and working with governors. The link governor is also the parish priest and visits the school regularly with a focus on monitoring standards in RE. He brings additional expertise to this role as a serving headteacher.

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

The leaders and governors have shown determination in ensuring that a drive for high standards is achieved through a focus on the personal development and well-being of pupils. They can describe the way in which the school's Christian character and values are at the heart of its mission. The school's Christian values are well understood by all members of the school community. They talk passionately of how the value of 'kindness' has been both necessary and therefore a key focus in the life of the school in recent times. Leaders and governors, supported by church members, show a very high degree of pastoral concern for all members of the school community. This is illustrated well by the comments made by parents who felt this is a school that demonstrates all of its Christian values through its absolute care for individuals and families. Parents comment that the school leadership team is 'amazing' and that they always take the time to listen to their concerns. Leaders have a clear vision and mission for the school which has been developed as a result of thorough self-evaluation. As a result they have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. This is particularly evident through improvements to collective worship as a result of careful evaluation. Although this mission is embedded in the life of the school it could be better presented through supporting documentation and more clearly signposted around the school and on the website. The school attends training and works closely with the diocese in order to strengthen leadership of RE and the curriculum. There is a very strong focus on professional development that contributes significantly to strong Christian leadership. The increased partnership with the parish church is a great strength to the school. Mutual respect and support enable both institutions to flourish and to fulfill their mission to the school and the local community of 'Living, working and growing together in the love of God'.