



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Soho Parish Church of England Primary School

23 Great Windmill Street
London W1D 7LF

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: London

Local authority: Westminster

Dates of inspection: 27 April 2016

Date of last inspection: May 2011

School's unique reference number: 101131

Headteacher: Joffy Conolly

Inspector's name and number: Allan McLean 823

School context

Soho Parish School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above the national average and the number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also significantly above the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average and the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also above average. The school is linked with two parish churches within the local area, however only a small number of pupils regularly attend church.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Soho Parish as a Church of England school are good

- The wide range of experiences pupils are given to encourage their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development positively impacts on their behaviour and their attitude to one another.
- The partnership with the two local parish churches makes a positive contribution to the school's Christian ethos.
- The value placed upon each individual, and the provision of a nurturing and supportive learning environment positively impacts on the achievement of the whole child.
- A respect for diversity and a celebration of those of different faiths and none is central to the mission of the school, whilst establishing a clear set of Christian values

Areas to improve

- To develop a new RE scheme of work, ensuring there is the correct coverage of all religions, combined with clearer progression and challenge.
- To make the 'Christian Roots' associated with the established set of values more fully known by all of the community.
- To develop a system which enables governors and leaders to develop formal monitoring and evaluation of RE and collective worship, so that there is a clear distinction between the two.

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

The school ensures that it serves the local community through an open admissions policy, based on distance to the school. A clear set of values are well known to the school community. These values are underpinned by clearly defined 'Christian Roots'. Parents commented on these roots as being 'the positive seeds that are sown for life'. All members of the school community thrive in this nurturing and caring environment and this is reflected in their academic success. Overall achievement is strong and shows rapid improvement over time. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and the staff team works hard to engage with families. As a result attendance figures have improved and are broadly in line with the national average. Great value is placed on each member of the whole school community. Religious Education provides pupils with opportunities to discuss similarities and differences between the different faiths represented in this diverse school community and this has created a culture where pupils show a high level of respect for one another and their beliefs. When speaking about the school, both parents and children describe it as a 'big family', emphasising how the Christian character of the school creates a culture where staff demonstrate a high level of care to everyone in the community. This reflects the school motto 'Small school, big heart'. The school is also actively involved in a great deal of charity work led by the pupils through the work of the school council. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely well supported through the act of daily worship and reflection time and the offer of a wide and rich curriculum.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is central to school life and makes a positive impact on the school community. Worship is jointly planned by the leadership team and the clergy. Themes include links to the RE curriculum and the key Christian festivals which are celebrated at St Anne's Church throughout the year. The school should give further consideration as to how collective worship could be used to reflect the school's Christian values throughout the year. The school is very well supported by representatives from both the church of St Anne's and St James'. As a result pupils develop a secure knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith including an age appropriate understanding of more complex Christian beliefs such as that of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Parents too appreciate the support and visible presence of the clergy. They comment positively on the unique skills both members of the clergy bring to collective worship, such as the use of puppetry, to engage the children. During their daily act of worship, pupils are given regular opportunities to pause and reflect upon biblical teaching, often resulting in practical acts of service to others within the school and beyond. This can be seen in the number of charities the school supports and in the worship observed where the story of 'The Good Samaritan' was shared and reflected upon. Following an evaluation of collective worship the school introduced a 'reflection' service which is held each week at St James's. Worship is specifically Christian but it is also inclusive of the whole school community. Parents of all faiths and none believe it is an important part of school life and provides children with clear moral guidance. As a result there are no withdrawals from collective worship. Prayer is an important part of school life and is naturally woven throughout the school day. Regular opportunities for both personal and collective prayer are given. Careful consideration has been given to secure a rich learning environment which encourages pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The staff and clergy governors have developed many effective informal systems for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of collective worship. The school leaders have recently introduced a more formal evaluation process which is yet to be embedded in the school. However, the informal evaluation processes have led to a significant improvement in the overall quality of collective worship since the last inspection.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious Education has a high profile within the school and pupils clearly enjoy the subject. Standards of attainment are generally in line with national expectations and consistent with standards in other core subjects. Most pupils are working at least within the expected level. Teaching in RE is good and sometimes better. Where teaching is best, the work is appropriately pitched and carefully planned, providing challenge and support to meet the differing needs of the pupils. However, progression in the curriculum is not clear and does not always support and challenge all pupils to attain and achieve as highly as they could. Teachers and leaders have worked hard to address the issues from the previous inspection. The marking of pupils' work affirms what has been done well, and in some incidences, poses relevant questions in order to extend pupils' thinking. Effective planning and good teaching enables pupils to develop a broad and accurate religious vocabulary. The RE curriculum makes a very strong contribution to both the school's Christian values and the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The teaching of Christianity is effective and this is evident in the pupils' secure knowledge of the Christian faith. The curriculum provides a good balance between helping pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding and also to reflect on the significance of religion in the world today. However, the curriculum needs to be developed further in order to ensure that it has the correct coverage for all religions, particularly Christianity. The subject leader has rightly identified the need to review the RE curriculum in light of the newly developed diocesan syllabus and to provide staff with appropriate training to extend their subject knowledge and delivery of this syllabus. The RE leader has established clear action plans and a robust monitoring system which has clearly led to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning in RE since the last inspection. Reporting to governors and involving them in monitoring and evaluating the subject would help to further improve standards. Consideration should be given to separating the RE and collective worship action plans in order to bring about increased clarity.

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

All members of the school community speak positively about belonging to this church school and readily give examples of how they benefit from being part of this unique community, regardless of any personal belief. The school's strap line 'small school, big heart' was written by the children and is known and understood by all members of the school community. This vision, underpinned by the outworking of the school's values and Christian roots, creates a nurturing and supportive learning environment in which pupils and adults flourish. These Christian roots, which are clearly articulated, should be shared more widely and confidently, so that there is a clearer understanding of the role the school plays in serving the local community as a Church of England School. Senior leaders have a good understanding of all aspects of the school, ensuring high standards of achievement and well-being are maintained. The Headteacher recognises the importance of equipping senior leaders to work successfully in a Church school and as a result leaders are benefitting from attendance at diocesan training. Leaders are incisive and accurate in their self-evaluation as they know both the strengths of the school and the areas for development. Governors regularly visit the school and are involved in elements of self-evaluation. The increased level of involvement of clergy within the governing body has increased the awareness of the community that this is a Church of England school. However, governors do not yet formally engage in a systematic review of the school as a Church school. The school has worked extremely hard to establish and develop strong partnerships with the parental body of the school and have successfully deepened the level of engagement with parents in order to support pupils' learning. This has had a very positive impact on narrowing the gaps in pupil attainment. Strong and effective partnerships are also enjoyed between the school and the parish churches of St Anne's and St James'. The support provided by the clergy makes a significant contribution to the Christian distinctiveness within the school.

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