



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

The Urswick School

Paragon Road
London
E9 6NR

Diocese: London

Local authority: Hackney

Dates of inspection: 10th -11th February 2015

Date of last inspection: 2nd -4th November 2009

School's unique reference number: 100284

Headteacher: Richard Brown

Inspector's name and number: Peter Hullah 825

School context

The Urswick School is situated in an area of deprivation. 828 pupils are on roll (62.5% boys 37.5% girls). 89% of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. 76% of pupils have been eligible for FSM at some time during the past 6 years. The present Head Teacher was appointed in April 2008. In 2011 the school changed its name and moved into a new building. In 2012 the school opened a Sixth Form Academy which has 98 pupils. In March 2013 the School was graded overall Good by Ofsted (Outstanding in Behavior and Safety and Leadership and Management). In March 2014 the school suffered the loss of a Year 11 pupil following a fatal shooting which took place at a domestic address.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of The Urswick School as a Church of England school are Outstanding

- The leadership and governance of the school are outstanding in promoting distinctive Christian values in every aspect of school life
- In an area of high deprivation, the school has focussed on the core Christian values of Believe and Achieve to secure significant academic progress and a change in the culture of learning
- Religious Education, a core subject studied by all pupils, is outstanding
- Learners value and respect the inclusive nature of the school. The school is a Christian school not a school for Christians
- The recently opened sixth form, building on the school's existing Christian ethos, is growing in size

Areas to improve

- Develop strategies across the whole school community for monitoring and evaluating the impact of collective worship, reflections and collective prayer
- Clarify, monitor and evaluate how the role of the Chaplain contributes to developing the Christian ethos of the School

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

The Christian ethos of The Urswick School, (formally Hackney Free and Parochial School) has been fundamental to the achievement and outstanding personal development of all learners. Believe and Achieve is the summation of the school's Christian values. One Year 10 pupil speaking of school's transformation said, " Believe and Achieve has been miraculous". The impact of this miracle can be seen in the way students, many living in areas of significant deprivation, are making progress academically and in their personal development, performing above national expectations for schools in similar surroundings. Rates of attendance are high and exclusion rates are very low with no permanent exclusions in 2013-2014. Very few racist, sexist or homophobic bullying incidents are recorded. Learners are excited by RE, which is well taught. RE plays a major part in shaping the Christian character of the school. An exceptionally strong leadership team ensures that learners fulfil their potential and are well-prepared and aspirational for life after school. The atmosphere around the school is purposeful and friendly with learners engaging in mature open discussion and debate in lessons. Students from all faith backgrounds (20% of the pupils are Muslim) feel happy and safe, secure that their beliefs are respected. The school lives out the Christian values of charity, love, inclusion and welcome giving free lunches to all pupils. 10 "guest pupils" transferring from the local Pupil Referral Unit are full members of the school. One pupil, excluded from a neighbouring school, talked of The Urswick School giving her a second chance, treating her with respect and care. Students and their parents from a range of religious backgrounds say how important it is to them that the school promotes Christian values and has a chapel and chaplain. A sixth form is being developed, its ethos growing out of the well-established Christian distinctiveness of the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is Good

Assemblies, regular class reflection time and whole school church services are valued and positively affect the way students learn and form a caring community. Year group worship and reflections are structured round a Thought for the Week. The Coordinator of Ethos and Values (a recently created leadership post) is responsible for the worship policy of the school, for promoting the Christian ethos of the school and for devising material to be used in assemblies and reflections. All pupils have reflection diaries although it is sometimes unclear how these are used. Reflections are well-resourced using Biblical quotes and sayings from religious leaders of all faiths to stimulate discussion and silent time. The school prayer and the Lord's Prayer are on display in every classroom and are in all reflection diaries although these are not always referred to in reflections or assemblies. Pupils at all levels value gathering for major Christian festivals and school celebrations at the parish church. The close relationship that the school has with the local church (The Rector is Vice Chair of Governors) has contributed significantly to the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the Christian ethos of the school. The Head Boy, who is a Muslim, said how he appreciated that a passage from the Qur'an was read at the school carol service in Church. Pupils participate in major services and sometimes in assemblies. Students have some access to the chapel and, in addition to leading services; the part time chaplain is a pastoral counsellor both to students and staff. Still Point, the voluntary morning service before school in the Chapel, is not widely known about by pupils. The school community has had to cope with serious tragedies recently and students acknowledge that attending a Church school has helped them significantly. One pupil said, " Assemblies and prayers have helped me understand how truly supportive and caring people can be and I now understand death better."

The effectiveness of the religious education is Outstanding

Religious Education (RE) is a central element in the effectiveness of the distinctive Christian character of The Urswick School. Although the RE GCSE results are below the national averages, the subject is core and inclusive, taken in Year 10 by all pupils and standards are significantly improving. The pass rate has risen by 20% since 2008 and RE is now the best performing of all the Humanities. 23% gained A*-A grades in RE in 2014. The Head of Department appointed in 2013 is line managed by an inspirational and experienced senior teacher. Together they ensure that lessons are exceptionally well planned and that the teaching and learning are effectively monitored. Teachers frequently share good practice and the department's internal Quality Assurance process, validated by external support from the London Diocese, shows that teaching is consistently Good and often Outstanding. Books are carefully marked and particular attention is paid to those requiring additional help. The RE curriculum from Year 7 to Year 11 contributes positively to improving academic standards in the school and links for learning are made between the value systems of all faiths. New schemes of work have been introduced at KS3 to sustain the Christian influences within the syllabus. At KS4 the RE lessons follow a consistent pattern across the range of abilities and good use is made of a range of resources to stimulate learning. In a Year 10 GCSE class considering the Christian view of Abortion, Biblical texts were used and pupils discussed openly how these could influence ethical and moral choices. One RE classroom is set aside on Friday lunchtime for Muslim prayers and is appropriately furnished. In the recently established Sixth Form, RE is taught to all students within General Studies and 2 students are studying a Philosophy of Religion A level course. Pupils at every level in the school are exceptionally positive about the contribution RE makes to their development.

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

The inspirational and highly respected Head Teacher leads a team of senior and middle leaders in a clear and sensitive manner and, at every opportunity, articulates the distinctive Christian values of the school. Leaders, staff and governors understand how the Christian ethos of the school has made a positive contribution to the transformation of the school since its refounding in a new building in 2011. Effective self-evaluation strategies enable the leadership to have a clear understanding of the school's academic performance and it has been judged Good overall by Ofsted in 2013. Pupils and staff who remember the school in its former life comment favourably on the impact that strong leadership together with the articulation of Christian values has had on every aspect of school life. RE is well led and the teaching of RE and the RE curriculum contribute favourably to the overall academic development of the school. Senior leaders are aspirational for the students and are outward looking in forming and developing links and partnerships which will enhance the life chances of pupils. The school is closely woven into the life of the local church, the community and the Diocese and there is mutual benefit. The leadership team and governors actively support the Three Faiths Forum and the links with Gordonstoun School and Hope University Liverpool. The Head Teacher is also the Executive Principal of the Regent's College Pupil Referral Unit, Hackney. The school respects the fact that Christopher Urswick is buried in St John at Hackney and that Joshua Watson, a local parishioner, founded the National Society of the Church of England. This respect is evidenced by the manner in which adults and pupils articulate Christian values, care for each other and want the best for each other. One sixth former commented, "God is working through this school."

SIAMS report February 2015 The Urswick School, Paragon Road London E9 6NR