



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Mary's CE Primary School

Barn Street

Stoke Newington

London

NI6 OJT

Diocese: London

Local authority: Hackney

Dates of inspection: 15th November 2013

Date of last inspection: 25th January 2007

School's unique reference number: 100271

Headteacher: Mrs Jane O'Brien

Inspector's name and number: Jayne Pavlou NS 628

School context

St Mary's CE School is a one form entry primary school with a Nursery. Pupils are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and the proportion of children who speak English as an additional language is above average. The number of pupils eligible for pupil premium is well above average. The proportion of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) supported through school action is well below average and the proportion supported through action plus or with a statement is broadly average. There have been a significant number of staff changes recently, including the Headteacher who took up her post in September 2013.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Mary's as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- Each individual member of the school community is valued and warmly welcomed into the strong and inclusive school family.
- The newly appointed Headteacher, with support from her leadership team is beginning to reawaken the Christian character of the school.
- Both the Headteacher and the recently appointed Rector are already establishing a positive and effective partnership and together are developing further opportunities for the pupils to engage and respond in worship.

Areas to improve

- For Governors, in partnership with other key stakeholders to create a clear and explicitly Christian vision for the school which will ensure that distinctively Christian values are embedded in the daily life of the school.
- To raise standards in RE by strengthening teachers' subject knowledge, sharpening success criteria to reflect the attainment targets in RE and establishing a rigorous and systematic approach to monitoring the subject, in order to improve the quality of learning and teaching.
- To complete the review of the current scheme of work in RE and frame a longer term plan for collective worship to enable the pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith.

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

The school demonstrates a strong, welcoming and inclusive ethos where pupils and parents from all cultures feel safe and happy, secure in the knowledge that their beliefs are respected and valued. Positive relationships between all members of the school community are enjoyed and this is evident in the good behaviour seen in and around the school. There is a clear commitment to meeting the needs of the whole child and this contributes to the good progress made by pupils in literacy and numeracy. The school works effectively with the Kids Company to provide additional care and support for some of their pupils. The recently appointed Headteacher has already shared her own vision for the school and has identified the need to develop, along with Governors, a school vision and mission statement that will explicitly reflect the Christian foundation of the school. Parents speak positively about the new Headteacher and how she is 'reawakening the values' within the school. Pupils are able to confidently identify and discuss the importance of the school values; although they are not yet able to place them within a Christian context. The learning environment is in the process of being thoughtfully cultivated to promote the spiritual development of pupils. This can be seen within individual classrooms through the provision of a 'reflection area' with a Bible, prayer book and candle on display. Pupils understand that these areas provide a place where they can take time out to 'pray or think' but the impact of the provision is not yet clear. Both the Headteacher and rector are actively working in partnership to consider further opportunities for the promotion of pupils' spiritual development through collective worship.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Collective worship is regarded as an important time in the school day and under the leadership of the newly appointed Headteacher it is being thoughtfully developed to enable pupils to more actively engage and participate in worship. Changes have been made to the weekly pattern of worship and guidance provided for teachers who are responsible for leading worship. This is helping to make worship more distinctively Christian, although learners still do not have sufficient opportunities to explore and learn about the Trinitarian nature of Christianity. The Rector who is relatively new in post has made changes to both the regular school church service and church assembly in order to make it more accessible and child friendly. Pupils and parents speak positively about these changes. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to pray throughout the day and the introduction of reflection areas has provided an opportunity for personal prayer and reflection. In the 'Gold Award' act of worship seen, children enthusiastically joined in with sung worship and prayer was set apart as a special times by the lighting of a candle, however opportunities were missed to link the school's Christian values with the behaviour and attitudes being celebrated. The Governors have welcomed the opportunity to take an active role in monitoring and evaluating collective worship and appreciated being able to spend a day in school with the Headteacher on this task.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

The recently appointed Religious Education (RE) subject leader, with effective support from the rest of the leadership team, is working hard to raise the profile of RE within the school. Clearly identified action points for RE are now included within the school's development plan and the staff recognise what needs to be done to further improve standards in both teaching and learning. The scheme of work is currently under review and new assessment procedures have recently been introduced, although they are not yet embedded and do not always inform future teaching and learning. Work seen in lessons and in books confirms the school's own judgement that work is broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils engaged positively in the lessons observed and where lessons were judged as good, time was given for pupils to reflect and respond to the subject, thus creating opportunities to enhance their spiritual development. However the work is not always pitched accurately and the marking of work does not often provide children with next steps in their learning. The school has responded well to findings of the previous inspection through the introduction of big books to record more creative aspects of RE work. Although this enables the subject to be monitored more easily, a more rigorous approach to assessment and monitoring would lead to pupils making accelerated progress. Carefully planned visits to the church supported by the Rector enrich the teaching of the subject. Year 2 pupils spoke enthusiastically about one such visit explaining that they had tried on different vestments and learned about the significance of their different colours. They summed up their visit by saying 'we always learn something new!'

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

The school has not fully met the recommendations of the last inspection, although the recently appointed Headteacher has done much to address the issues in the short time she has been in post. The website and other documentation, including the school motto 'excellence and enjoyment in everything we do' does not explicitly articulate the Christian character or vision of the school. The school Governors have clearly welcomed the invitation by the Headteacher to raise the profile of the school's Christian distinctiveness and have embraced the opportunity to develop their understanding of this by spending a day in school participating in collective worship and undertaking a learning walk. However because of a number of vacancies on the Governing Body and a number of new appointments, capacity has been limited and they have not yet formally reviewed the distinctiveness of the school as a church school. Areas for development have now been clearly identified and incorporated within the school's development plan. The school enjoys a number of strong partnerships including St Mary's Church, the Diocese and Kids Company, although wider links within the community and global links are limited. Under the leadership of the new Head, the school has strong capacity to make good progress in the area of Christian distinctiveness. Governors, staff and parents have great confidence in the new Head and say that she has 'had a huge impact in the short time she has been here.'

SIAMS report [November 2013] [St Mary's Primary School, Stoke Newington] [N16 0JT]