



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Stephen's Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School

Uxbridge Road
Shepherd's Bush
London
W12 8LH

Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding

Current SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Diocese: London

Local authority: London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham

Date of inspection: 28 January 2016

Date of last inspection: June 2011

School's unique reference number: 100353

Headteacher: Michael Schumm

Inspector's name and number: Pamela Draycott 161

School context

St Stephen's Church of England voluntary aided primary school is a popular and oversubscribed school serving the diverse communities in and around Shepherd's Bush. It is currently expanding from one form of entry to two. Pupils come from a range of socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. The percentage for whom pupil premium funding is received, due to social disadvantage, is around the national average, as is the percentage of pupils with some sort of special educational need. Most pupils are from Christian family backgrounds. The next largest religion represented in the school is Islam.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Stephen's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The effective and aspirational Christian leadership provided by the headteacher, supported by senior leaders, governors and clergy. This is underpinned by an overtly Christian and inclusive ethos of God being at the centre of all aspects of school life.
- The school's Christian ethos has a significant and positive impact on the daily lives and progress made by pupils. It is rightly proud of its Christian service to pupils and their families.
- Pupil behaviour is exemplary and reflects very positive and caring relationships evident across the school community based on the school's Christian foundation.
- Pupils various talents and gifts are recognised and celebrated because they are treated as individuals, each precious to God.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that as the school expands its Christian ethos is embedded in the necessary changes and developments.

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

St Stephen's is a friendly, caring and very happy school. Its motto of 'through God we achieve' is deeply embedded as part of its Christian service to its communities. Christian values such as love and respect are highly evident across the school. During this period of expansion from one form entry to two, there is a keen and shared commitment to ensuring that all pupils continue to flourish within a strong Christian and inclusive learning environment. The school strives successfully to ensure that pupils develop well both academically and personally. This means that standards are consistently high and that pupils make very good academic progress from their various starting points. It also means that pupils' varying gifts and talents are well nurtured and celebrated. Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are polite, accepting and respectful towards their peers as well as towards adults in the school. They speak confidently of the school's Christian and inclusive ethos with, 'God at the centre of everything we do'. One parent commented that through the school, 'My children see faith as a positive thing in their life. They are understanding of other faiths and growing in their own.' In keeping with its Christian ethos, the work of the school councillor is an example of how support is provided to help pupils and their families through longer or shorter term difficult times. Pupils feel safe and cared for in school. Consequently, attendance is consistently above the national average. The school works respectfully with individuals and their families where there is any concern about behaviour or progress. Relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves are respectful. There is a strong sense of belonging to St Stephen's school as a Christian community. Religious Education (RE) makes a strong contribution to the school's Christian ethos through the curriculum taught and the ways in which it helps pupils see the relevance of faith in today's world. As a pupil said, 'RE helps us to learn more about ourselves and about Christianity as well as other faiths. That's important because we need to show respect and care to others just as Jesus would do.' There is a broad curriculum in place which is extended through school visits, charitable fund raising, extra-curricular clubs and an annual prayer day. RE focused visits to the parish church enhances the school's Christian ethos. These contribute well to the wide range of opportunities for the outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development provided for pupils.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Daily worship is very well planned and delivered. It is a central feature of school life and effectively underpins and extends the school's embedded Christian ethos. Worship content explores, for example, Bible stories and Christian teachings. This includes reflecting on Christian belief about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and the example of Jesus for Christians. Principal Christian festivals, as well as the festivals of other world faiths represented in the school community, are well celebrated. Consequently, the worship programme contributes effectively to pupils developing knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith, irrespective of their own, or their families' faith position. A clear structure for delivering worship is in place which happens in different groupings across the school week. Pupils and staff have very positive attitudes towards worship which is viewed as both engaging, enjoyable, inspirational and important in expressing the school's underpinning Christian ethos. Pupils participate enthusiastically, enjoy singing, listening, answering questions and offering ideas. Prayer, both set and spontaneous, is central to school life. Pupils know that there are different types of prayer and that people pray in different ways. As one Year 5 pupil said, 'God always answers prayer but sometimes not in the way we expect or want'. A Year 6 pupil reflected, 'I often pray before I go to bed to ask for forgiveness for mistakes I've made and to thank God for the good things that happened'. Parents report that their children talk about what has happened in worship and often sing or say prayers they have learned in school. Pupils know the Lord's Prayer and find it natural to write their own prayers and reflections in class. Elements of Anglican worship such as an opening sentence with response, singing, reading from the Bible, saying the Lord's Prayer as well as some understanding of how the church uses different colours on covers and robes at different times of the year are embedded in school practice. Pupils, staff and parents are given the opportunity to comment on the impact of worship regularly and as a result some positive changes have been made.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE has a very high profile as a 'core subject'. The content is well balanced between teaching about Christianity and other faiths. A wide range of teaching activities give an appropriate balance between developing knowledge and understanding and applying that to society and to their own lives. Teachers are confident in teaching RE. Teaching is consistently good and often outstanding. Lessons are very well planned and usually pitched well to meet the different learning needs of those in the class. The subject leader is new to the school and new to RE subject leadership although he has co-ordinated other subjects in other schools. He has already developed, alongside the headteacher an effective and detailed plan for further development in RE. This is based on local and national developments in the curriculum and assessment of the subject area. Pupils' attainment is in line with other core subjects, especially with English. Consequently, pupils make very good progress in RE in all year groups and standards are above national expectations. Pupils engage very well with and enjoy RE, finding it interesting and challenging. They listen to their teacher and each other's ideas and beliefs respectfully and well. The level of discussion is at least at and often above age-related expectations. They have opportunities to compare and contrast beliefs and ideas, as well as develop skills such as analysis and evaluation through their RE work. Their written work in RE is detailed and there is very little evidence of unfinished work, which indicates their engagement and involvement in the subject. Pupils' progress is regularly assessed. Teacher comments are increasingly being responded to by pupils which helps them improve their work well. The effectiveness of the RE programme is monitored well by the subject leader as is the progress being made against the key areas identified in the RE plan.

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

The headteacher, very well supported by staff and governors have not 'stood still' since the previous denominational inspection. The issue identified in that inspection has been addressed well. The school has made the decision to move from a one form entry to two forms of entry based on a confident Christian vision of service to its local communities. The importance of maintaining the Christian distinctiveness of the school during this period of expansion has been very well addressed. Leaders have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. This is demonstrated in its accurate self-evaluation and strategic improvement planning. Governors are supportive of the school as a church school and are appropriately involved in school life. The RE link governor is supportive of the subject area. He ensures that governors are well informed about both the content and quality of RE being taught in the school. The parish clergy are deeply involved in the worship programme. Both areas meet statutory requirements. Parents are extremely supportive of the school and its Christian ethos which is, in their opinion, 'woven into the fabric of the school rather than being a bolt on'. Parents are well engaged with their children's learning. A prayer group meets regularly and parents from that group run a whole school prayer day during the summer term each year. There is a strong Friends of St Stephen's group with a wide range of parental participation as well as a number of parents volunteering to help in school on a regular basis. The school has strong links with the parish church and with a neighbouring parish. The school is committed to the professional development of staff. It provides a range of opportunities for them to develop their understanding of working in the church school sector. The new RE subject leader is being supported very well by the headteacher and by attending RE diocesan support meetings. The school is outward looking and has good links with the Diocese. In addition it works in partnership with Kick London, a Christian group focused on exploring the Christian faith through sport.

St Stephen's CE (VA) Primary School, Uxbridge Road, Shepherd's Bush, London, W12 8LH