



# St Mary's Church of England Primary School



## Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools

### Inspection Report

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School address	Dollis Park Finchley N3 1BT
Headteacher	Rob Allen
Type of School	Primary
Status	Voluntary Aided
Unique Reference Number	101323
Diocese	London
Local Authority	London Borough of Barnet
Date of last inspection	11 <sup>th</sup> January 2007

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Inspection date	6th December 2011
National Society Inspector	Daniel Norris (NS 755)

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The Education Act 2005 (Section 48) requires the governing body or foundation governors of Church of England Schools to appoint a person to undertake the inspection of denominational education and collective worship in schools with a religious character.

### **School context**

St Mary's is a heavily over-subscribed two-form entry primary school with provision for morning and afternoon Nursery. There are 480 pupils on roll and approximately one third of the pupils have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities is below average. The school works closely with its two sponsoring parishes; St Mary-at-Finchley and St Paul's Finchley. Children come from a wide range of faith backgrounds with the predominant groups being Christian, Jewish and Muslim.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Mary's as a Church of England school are outstanding.**

Significant progress has been made since the last inspection to ensure that the school is now highly distinctive and effective as a Church school. Outstanding leadership has ensured that Christian values and the Christian ethos at St Mary's have been developed and deepened. Collective worship makes an outstanding contribution to the school's distinctiveness. The school has been highly effective in raising standards and improving provision, has shown that the Christian ethos is now well embedded and has plans to develop it further. The school therefore has outstanding capacity to develop further as a Church school.

### **Established strengths**

- The outstanding leadership of the Headteacher, clergy and governors that have transformed the Christian ethos of the school since the last inspection
- The quality of collective worship and the positive impact that this has on the entire school community
- The explicit focus on developing Christian values that guide behaviour and enhance relationships
- The outstanding behaviour of pupils, their preparedness for learning and the enthusiasm they show for their school as a Christian school

### **Focus for development**

- Further raise standards in RE by ensuring that there is effective tracking of pupil's development of RE skills that informs teachers lesson planning.

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

On the day of the inspection pupils exclaimed with pride, 'we are all one at St Mary's'. This captures the essence of the school's inclusive Christian character where all are welcomed and everyone is encouraged to flourish. Pupils feel valued and fully involved in all aspects of their education and can describe how the school has got better at meeting their learning needs. Parents report that the school's Christian ethos improves its welcome and ensures that children leave with good morals and are spiritually aware. Pupils of other faiths feel valued and included and enjoy the opportunities they have to share their culture and faith. The entire school community has a clear understanding of the Christian values that underpin all aspects of school life. A more recent explicit focus on half-termly Christian values is providing excellent opportunities for all children to explore the school's values in greater depth through worship and across the wider curriculum. The school's values are celebrated in displays around the school of which pupils are extremely proud and in the regular awarding of school values awards acknowledging those pupils who are excellent role models. Children are able to refer to biblical texts and teachings that are the foundation of their values. The school has a highly purposeful atmosphere and standards of behaviour are excellent. High expectations and aspirations are shared by pupils and staff and one pupil stated, 'the teachers are all getting better and so are we'. Pupils are taught to be responsible global citizens and many pupils enjoy the opportunity to care for God's world as eco-warriors or by serving the school community on the school council. The impact of the school's Christian values over time can be seen in the confidence of Year 6 pupils that the school has prepared them well to move to secondary school and that the values they have learned at St Mary's will go with them and guide them in their lives to come.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

The quality of collective worship is now a key strength of the school. The leadership of this area is strengthened considerably by the collaboration between the Headteacher and the Clergy who meet regularly to strategically plan worship opportunities and how this important aspect of school life can be improved. This effective partnership has enabled school staff to ensure that school worship reflects the broad range of worship of both churches and is more strongly linked to the Anglican lectionary. Worship is central to the daily life of the school and all pupils participate with enthusiasm. There are regular opportunities for pupils to worship in Church and they feel welcomed when they visit. Pupils interviewed on the day of the inspection said that they enjoyed worship, enjoyed taking an active role and were able to describe how they had applied what they had learned and reflected upon in worship to their daily lives. This included, for example, the desire to give more to charity for one pupil and the decision to proceed to confirmation in the Anglican Church for another. Worship is enriched with music and the quality of pupil's singing is excellent. Parents welcome the opportunity to attend worship on a weekly basis. A particularly successful aspect of the development of collective worship has been the empowerment of class teachers, through effective training, to lead collective worship in their classrooms. Pupils and staff really value this opportunity for a more intimate and personalised opportunity to reflect on themes in the light of the daily routine of the classroom. Teachers make records of worship and these show how the main themes have been addressed and used to talk about issues that have arisen in their class or that are topical, for example during anti-bullying week children reflected on the importance of including and caring for everyone. Effective planning, record keeping and monitoring of class worship ensure that this is a highly effective opportunity for both staff and pupils. Teachers receive feedback on how they lead worship and this has enabled them to feel more confident. There are opportunities for staff to meet together for worship and staff questionnaires indicate that these opportunities are highly valued and enable them to reflect on their own spiritual lives. Class prayer boards are effective in providing pupils with an opportunity to 'bring their cares, concerns and thanks to God in prayer'. The school has plans to further enhance the opportunities for pupils to lead worship.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Pupils' achievement in Religious Education (RE) is above average and in line with that of other core subjects and they make good progress over time. Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and particularly enjoy the creative opportunities given to them. Lesson planning ensures that there is a balance between learning about and from religion and that there is an appropriate balance of teaching about Christianity and other world faiths. Pupils of the Jewish and Muslim faith talked enthusiastically about being 'experts' in RE lessons and about how they feel valued by being able to share their faith and culture with other pupils. A strong focus on assessment for learning in all areas of the curriculum has impacted positively on RE. Pupils receive good quality feedback on their work that extends their thinking. All lessons observed during the inspection were at least good. The RE co-ordinator is currently developing a formal system for tracking pupil progress in RE skills. In the best RE lessons there are clear success criteria that are directly linked to the development of RE skills and clearly differentiated tasks that enable pupils to demonstrate their learning and provide extension for the most able. This is still being developed and is not yet fully consistent across the school. Further RE specific training for staff will support their confidence in teaching RE and enable pupils to make even more rapid progress.

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

The Headteacher and other senior leaders and governors have a strong vision for the Christian distinctiveness and ethos of the school. Their passion for the development of this area can be clearly seen in the significant improvements that have been made since the last inspection. This Christian vision is shared and supported by the entire school community who are clear about the school's distinctively Christian, yet fully inclusive ethos. The partnership with both sponsoring parishes has improved significantly and is now highly effective in enabling both churches and the school to work in active association. A particularly strong feature of the partnerships is the regular presence in the school of Clergy from both St Mary's and St Paul's and the Children and Families Support Worker from St Paul's Church. Their enthusiasm and drive has provided significant guidance, direction and support. The Diocesan Advisor has provided support to the school and

enhanced the school's development by leading training and development opportunities that have been very much appreciated by staff. Senior leaders and governors have made highly effective use of monitoring and self-evaluation to ensure that the Christian vision for the school is put into practice. The school's self-evaluation is insightful, robust and accurate. The development of the spiritual life of the school, Religious Education and collective worship feature prominently in school development planning and parents, pupils and staff are involved in reviewing policies and practice. The care given to the recruitment process and subsequent induction of the newly appointed Deputy Headteacher has shown that governors have very clearly defined criteria for the qualities and attributes of Christian leaders and this will support the development of the future leadership of the school as a Church school. There is strong commitment from school leaders and governors to continue to enhance and enrich the school's Christian ethos and its contribution to the wider Diocese. The school has outstanding capacity to improve further as a Church school.

SIAS report.



## Judgement Recording Form (NSJRF)



**Name of School:** St Mary's C E Primary School Finchley  
Dollis Park, Finchley, N3 1BT

**Date of inspection:** 6<sup>th</sup> December 2011  
**Type of Church school:** Voluntary Aided  
**Phase of education:** Primary  
**Number of pupils:** 480  
**URN Number:** 101323  
**NS Inspector's Number:** NS: 755

**Rating 1-4**

<b>How distinctive and effective is the school as a Church school?</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>How effective is the religious education?</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>How effective are the leadership and management of the school, as a church school?</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The school meets the statutory requirement for collective acts of worship</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>The school meets the statutory requirement for religious education *</b>	<b>Yes</b>

\* *Voluntary Aided Schools*