



# Christ Church C of E Primary School



## Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools

### Inspection Report

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| School address          | Redhill Street<br>London<br>NW1 4BD |
| Headteacher             | Mrs Paula Aitcheson-Walker          |
| Type of School          | Primary                             |
| Status                  | Voluntary Aided                     |
| Unique Reference Number | 101927                              |
| Diocese                 | London                              |
| Local Authority         | London Borough of Camden            |
| Date of last inspection | July 2009                           |

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| Inspection date            | 28th February 2012         |
| National Society Inspector | Miss Gladys Vendy (NS 299) |

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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.

### **Context**

Christ Church is an attractive oversubscribed one form entry school with an early years' unit which includes children of nursery age. It is situated in a very disadvantaged area of Camden surrounded by blocks of flats. The majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, the largest being of Bangladeshi or Black African heritage. It has close links with the parish church of St Mary Magdalene, Munster Square. An above average number of pupils is eligible for free school meals. The majority of children speak English as an additional language with many at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or learning disabilities is above average. Children enter the school with skill levels well below those expected for their age. They make very good progress and levels of attainment are broadly average and rising by the end of Key Stage Two. Pupil and staff mobility is low. Children come from a fairly even balance of Christian and Muslim families. Other world faiths are also represented. The school holds Investor in People status.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Christ Church School as a Church of England school are outstanding.**

The school has many outstanding features. It has close links with the church of St Mary Magdalene as well as other church staff in the deanery who nurture it well. The strong Christian leadership of the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body is well embedded in the calm daily life of the school. The individual care given to each child is manifested in their excellent social, moral, spiritual and cultural development and the respect which is shown for all in the school community.

### **Established strengths**

- Excellent relationships supported by a shared vision for the school, as a church school led effectively by the Head Teacher, Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body.
- The calm and inclusive ethos that values and cares for all children and adults and supports their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development
- The impact of the carefully planned environment, collective worship and religious education upon developing the prayer life of pupils from all faiths.

### **Focus for development**

There are no significant areas for development.

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

The work of the school lives and is driven by the clear mission statement - 'The Christian faith is at the heart of our school community. At Christ Church we care for each other and learn together'. This permeates through all activities and influences all strategies and policies. It has a major impact upon the positive attitudes of the school community and the respect which is shown to everyone. The staff guidelines are embedded in the Christ Church Team vision, 'We are all equal and working towards a shared purpose. Remember each day is a new day'. From the street the school appears as a colourful and attractive building. Inside one is struck by the oasis of calm. Children are proud of the newly created outdoor reflection area with its steel candles of running water and areas of quiet which they enjoy using - 'I can sit here and block out the world'. A Muslim child said 'I feel faith all around me'. Display boards in the hall reflect the work of each class in RE. A 'keeping in touch board' shows that those who leave the school, either pupils or adults, are valued and remembered. The Christian values of respect, self discipline and quiet thoughtfulness towards others underpin the excellent behaviour and attitudes of the pupils. This is rewarded in a number of ways such as being invited to attend a special gold tea party or to choose a reward from the Head Teacher's treasure box. The calm and inclusive ethos embraces and welcomes the diversity of the school community in many ways. Workshops are held for parents, the use of Makaton ensures that all children can equally access information and communicate effectively and festivals of Christian and Muslim faiths are recognised and enjoyed. Strong tracking procedures and secure strategies enable all children to fulfil their potential and to meet their needs. A wide range of activities offers opportunities for very good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development and parents help at

these. Playground friends, reading buddies, a green team and an influential school council further develop pupils' citizenship skills. Community cohesion is very good. Parents are fulsome in their affirmation of the school as a church school and feel they are part of one family. The school has strong links with the church and shares notices with them and supports the Homeless Shelter. The school has developed very good global links particularly with a school in Pakistan.

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

Worship is of central importance in the life of the school, underpinning its Christian character. Acts of worship are well planned by the Vicar, RE subject leader and Head Teacher, and reflect the Christian year. These are constantly reviewed and revised as necessary. The pattern of weekly worship ensures that children are able to experience a variety of worship styles. Children participate in the half termly Eucharist through serving, reading and leading the prayers. Those children and adults who have been confirmed are invited to receive communion and those who are preparing for confirmation to come for a blessing. All faiths attend and children say that this is a 'special and holy time'. The whole school attends church several times a year. Leavers are given a copy of the New Testament at their service. Parents, governors and friends enjoy attending school worship in the church, class-led assemblies and special events such as Eid assembly and Black History assembly. At the observed act of worship the whole school, including the nursery children, listened carefully to the story of the Good Samaritan which was engagingly told using Makaton by a qualified sign practitioner. The children responded well to the visiting priest's discussion. One of the Muslim boys linked the story to the teaching in the Q'ran to 'be faithful to God and love our neighbour' and read a prayer in Arabic. The children sang tunefully in canon, harmony and descant contributing to the reverent atmosphere. The candle was lit for prayer and pupils said the Lord's Prayer and the school prayer with confidence. Each classroom has a worship table with religious artefacts and a prayer box which is used by children of all faiths – sometimes prayers are written in a child's home language. A parents' prayer group meets weekly praying through prayers which pupils and staff have requested and placed in the prayer box in the foyer. A Jesus and Me (JAM) club has been set up for Key Stage Two children by one of the parents. This is fully attended and is making its own banner. Children showed very good Biblical knowledge and asked sensible questions such as 'are all the books of the Bible written by prophets?' They say that it is 'the best club ever and great fun'. Pupils talk confidently about their beliefs, and are respectful of the different view of others. The Gospel choir which has a high reputation in the community performed with passion, clarity and joy.

### **The effectiveness of Religious Education is outstanding**

Religious Education is given a high profile and properly timetabled, budgeted and resourced. The Diocesan scheme of work, augmented by the Solihull scheme, is used with a highly developed approach to Godly Play as a core part of the teaching and learning. There is a very good balance of teaching Christianity and other faiths. The scheme is taught over two years and staff support each other effectively by pairing to plan its delivery. The issue from the previous denominational inspection of establishing and implementing the principles of Godly Play alongside age-appropriate learning outcomes for older pupils has been fully addressed and resulted in raised standards and enjoyment in RE. Children say they enjoy RE, especially Godly Play because 'it's a time of silence and makes you think'. The RE co-ordinator, who is a member of the Senior Leadership Team, is passionate and enthusiastic about her role. Assessment, including self assessment, is fully embedded. Achievement in both attainment targets is recorded termly in assessment files which are monitored to ensure progress is being tracked and made in terms of 'learning about' and 'learning from'. These records are then passed on to the next teacher. Standards and progress in RE are at least as good as those in other core subjects. When there are no written outcomes from the lesson a range of recording methods including photographs or summaries are used. The link governor helps to scrutinise the books and reports back to the Governing Body. Lessons are sometimes modelled by the subject leader. Feedback on observed lessons is constructive. Learning was observed occurring within the whole school focus of speaking and listening. The Foundation Stage children were learning about prayer and had made a book to which their parents and carers had contributed photos and speech bubbles. Children proudly talked about their pictures and other children were encouraged to ask questions. One boy pointed to his picture and said 'I am a Muslim. I stand on a special mat when I pray'. A variety of visual stimuli was used across the school through ICT, creative activities and artefacts giving children fun ways to learn such as in the secret picture game about marriage in the Christian church. Older children worked

well together showing that they could evaluate each other's work positively. Children displayed a natural curiosity and responded well to higher order questioning such as when they were considering Samuel's encounter with God. All pupils showed very good prior knowledge and understanding and were keen to respond especially when they were considering the four key questions which underpin Godly Play. The quality of learning and teaching observed was very good.

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

The Head Teacher has a clear and well grounded Christian vision for the school. Her calm presence spreads across the school so that pupils know they are safe and happy and can be themselves. Childhood is promoted and respected by all in the school community. The result is that children are confident and know that they belong to a family beyond their home - 'we are the Christ Church family' said one child. Staff respond well to the trust placed in them by the Head Teacher which enables them to grow and develop their personal and professional skills. The Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body offer very good support leading to excellent relationships between all groups. The Vicar's regular presence means that the school's relationship with the church is a distinctive and important feature. Governors are actively involved in school life, attending worship, learning workshops and performances as well as contributing to subject policies and monitoring the legislative aspects for which they are responsible. They are aware of their strategic role and support, challenge and act as a critical friend. A clear and comprehensive RE and worship action plan accurately identifies areas for development and is overseen by all governors at the beginning of each year. This indicates that there is excellent capacity for further improvement. The robust response to the pre-inspection briefing showed that issues had been carefully thought through. Very good induction procedures welcome those new to the school. Pupils and parents are regularly surveyed about worship and RE and feel that children are 'able to reflect and pray during the day'. A visiting adult commented that she always feels 'spiritually enriched' after attending worship and a member of staff said that 'I'm blessed to be here'. The Parents in Partnership organisation actively supports the ethos of the school providing social and fund raising events. The school enjoys very good support from the diocese. The judgement of outstanding in the previous denominational inspection has been maintained and in some areas exceeded.



## Judgement Recording Form (NSJRF)



**Name of School:** Christ Church C of E Primary School  
Redhill Street, London, NW1 4BD

**Date of inspection:** 28th February 2012  
**Type of Church school:** Voluntary Aided  
**Phase of education:** Primary  
**Number of pupils:** 230  
**URN Number:** 101927  
**NS Inspector's Number:** 299

Rating 1-4

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