



# Clerkenwell Parochial Church of England Primary School



## Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools

### Inspection Report

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School address	Amwell Street London EC1R 1UN
Headteacher	Mr Matt O'Brien
Type of School	Primary
Status	Voluntary Aided
Unique Reference Number	100436
Diocese	London
Local Authority	Islington
Date of last inspection	February 2009

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Inspection date	12th January 2012
National Society Inspector	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

Clerkenwell Parochial is an oversubscribed one form entry school without a nursery class situated in a densely populated and deprived area near to the centre of London. It has close links with the local churches of St Mark's, St James, Clerkenwell and Our Most Holy Redeemer, Exmouth Market. Less than half the pupils are of white British heritage, the remainder being from a wide range of ethnicities of which the largest is of Black African, Black Caribbean or mixed white/black Caribbean background. An above average number of pupils is eligible for free school meals. About a quarter of children speak English as an additional language. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. Pupil mobility is high. Children enter the school with low levels of attainment relative to age related expectations in the Reception class. They make very good progress and by the end of Key Stage Two reach above average levels of attainment in English and Mathematics.

Three years ago the school was in a soft federation having been adversely affected by several changes of Head Teacher. Since then numbers have increased and the school has made very good progress. A significant number of pupils are from practising Christian families. Most of the other main world faiths are represented.

## **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Clerkenwell Parochial School as a Church of England school are outstanding**

The close links between the school and local churches effectively and distinctively secure the Christian ethos of inclusiveness. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced by the Christian vision epitomised in the 'Clerkenwell Way'.

## **Established strengths**

- Christian values, which are central to the school ethos, impact strongly on the inclusive nature of the school thus encouraging very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the school community.
- The leadership and management of the school, underpinned by the very good relationships with the local clergy and links with the local community, provide an excellent role model for personal development and growth.
- Very good quality worship supported through the Religious Education scheme of work impacts strongly upon the flourishing Christian witness of the school.

## **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 its learners.**

The school was established over three hundred years ago and lives out its mission and vision statement to serve its community through 'excellence within Christian education'. The school badge with its logo 'Aqua Viva' is understood by everyone to symbolise Christianity which is at the heart of the school. The diversity of pupils' backgrounds is celebrated in a supportive environment underpinned by the Christian values of respect, tolerance, self discipline and thoughtfulness towards each other. These are epitomised in 'The Clerkenwell Way' – a rule of life - which all the pupils understand, talk about and apply to their daily conduct. As a result relationships with and between adults and children are secure and positive. Christian behaviour is recognised and rewarded as much as academic achievement. Circle time and philosophy for children allow an effective response to issues raised. The school values every child and makes very good provision for supporting vulnerable pupils by close tracking procedures (including at lunchtime) and good intervention strategies. Home school liaison officers and counsellors provide more specialist help for children and their families. Breakfast club and a wide range of over-subscribed after school clubs, sometimes led by external specialists, offer opportunities for all learners, including pupils on the gifted and talented register, to engage in activities in the wider community. Links with local businesses support children's reading and teach children debating skills. Parenting workshops and courses support parents' ability to help their children. There are many visible signs that this is a church school. RE displays are of a high quality and children are taught how to use the prayer

areas in their classrooms. The School Council and the Green Team make very positive contributions such as organising fund raising events and developing the roof garden. Pupils learn to take responsibility through peer mediation, buddying and prefect and monitor duties. The school benefits from the mutual prayerful and social support of the local churches. Although mobility is high there are some parents whose families have attended the school for generations and refer to the school as 'our' school'. 'We love it all', 'it is good that children learn about other faiths', 'children talk about RE and worship at home' – were some of the comments. Community cohesion is outstanding. Children's global awareness is strong and there are very good links with the local community and with overseas schools in Africa and China. The school has gained its intermediate International award.

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

Collective worship is embedded in the life of the school and benefits from the close involvement of the local churches. It is carefully planned by the RE subject leader on a four yearly cycle in collaboration with clergy and worship leaders. It integrates with the RE scheme of work when appropriate to make it more meaningful. The structured pattern of daily and weekly worship is seen as a time when the school comes to God as a community. It includes a weekly celebration of the Mass which was observed. This was a moving service attended by some parents, reflecting the Gospel for the week, the baptism of Jesus. The use of words and pictures on the screen helped the children to remain focussed. All children sang the liturgy and responses and listened carefully to the readings and prayers which children had committed to memory. The singing was confident, tuneful and contemplative. A significant number of children have been confirmed or are admitted to Holy Communion and received the sacrament reverently. Staff from both churches lead worship during the week so that children experience different traditions of worship. This regular input of knowledge, skills and experience contributes to the children learning more about the breadth of the Anglican church. All the major Christian festivals are celebrated and children visit the local churches several times a year for whole school services. Parents view all the churches as part of their community. Pupil conferencing shows that children look forward to worship as 'we think about how wonderful God is'. Each class says a different prayer at the end of the day as children progress through the school. Written feedback is given to all who lead worship. Worship is formally monitored, evaluated and reported upon to the Governing Body.

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

Religious Education is given a high profile and standards of attainment are often above those achieved in other subjects. RE is properly timetabled, carefully budgeted, appropriately resourced and very well led. The school has established its own scheme of work based on the Diocesan and local authority schemes. This is taught over two years so that classes effectively support each other by pairing for planning its delivery. There is a very good balance of teaching Christianity and other faiths both in depth and comparatively. Each year all classes study different aspects of the Christmas and Easter stories enabling good continuity and progression. Work is regularly scrutinised, lessons observed and feedback given to staff and governors. Very good cross curricular links were observed with all other subjects such as when learning about the festival of Sukkot children looked at migration and history and then designed and decorated a sukkah. Learning is always placed within the context of previous work and pupils showed very good prior knowledge and understanding. They often start a new unit of work by evaluating what they already know and developing questions to shape their future learning. ICT is used effectively as a visual stimulus and children learning about the Buddha were confident in narrating a video clip. Children are articulate and familiar with the use of religious terms, for example being able to explain that meditation is 'taking all the thoughts out of your head'. The quiet atmosphere of a Godly play session was a powerful way to encourage and challenge children to make their own decisions. One child in the reception class who was playing at the sand tray explained that it reminded her of the three wise men travelling across the desert. The quality of learning and teaching observed was very good. RE assessment is well set up with tracking sheets that are passed onto the next teacher. Children confidently expressed their enjoyment of RE lessons.

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

The Head Teacher's strong Christian vision for the school is confidently articulated and shared with all in the community. The Senior Leadership Team support and nurture staff at all levels which leads to harmonious relationships. Staff morale is high. Everyone is committed to raising the effectiveness and quality of teaching and promoting the Christian values of the school. Succession planning is initiated by identifying the skills set of staff and utilising them, promoting high quality professional development and through a well organised coaching and mentoring system. Newly appointed teachers say that they are very well mentored. The high expectations for collective worship and the teaching of RE are supported through very good induction procedures which include role modelling, shared teaching and continuous evaluation. In service training for collective worship and the RE curriculum allow staff to have the skills and knowledge to remain true to the school's vision. The RE subject leader has created an imaginative portfolio as a record of high quality worship and RE. Governors are linked with classes as well as subjects and build very good relationships with staff and pupils. They discuss and influence the strategic direction of the school and scrutinise policy and performance. In their role as critical friends they are actively involved in creating and evaluating the delivery of action plans in RE and Collective Worship. The Governing Body upholds and maintains the Christian integrity of the school. The school has excellent links with the local churches and their staff. Children new to the school are inducted into 'the Clerkenwell Way' through a buddying system. Pupils and parents views are taken into account through regular surveys and acted upon when appropriate. Communication with parents is very good and the Parent Teacher Association is active and efficient. Parent coffee mornings are held regularly and 'bring a parent to class/lunch' sessions also contribute to effective parental links. There were no issues for development at the last denominational inspection. The school is well supported by the diocese and the local authority. The provision for collective worship, the teaching of RE and the strong leadership and management of the school impact strongly upon the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a church school.

SIAS report January 2012 Clerkenwell Parochial VA Primary, EC1R1UN



## Judgement Recording Form (NSJRF)



**Name of School:** Clerkenwell Parochial Church of England Primary School  
Amwell Street, London, EC1R 1UN

**Date of inspection:** 12th January 2012  
**Type of Church school:** Voluntary Aided  
**Phase of education:** Primary  
**Number of pupils:** 201  
**URN Number:** 100436  
**NS Inspector's Number:** 299

Rating 1-4

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

\* Voluntary Aided Schools