



# St Nicholas Church of England Primary School



## Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools

### Inspection Report

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School address                      Manor Farm Avenue  
   Shepperton  
   Surrey  
   TW17 9AD

Headteacher                              Liz Felsing

Type of School                              Primary  
Status    Voluntary Aided  
Unique Reference Number              125230  
Diocese    London  
Local Authority                              Surrey  
Date of last inspection                      May 2008

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Inspection date                              12<sup>th</sup> November 2012  
National Society Inspector              Alan Thornsby (NS 137)

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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 Nicholas is a large primary school serving mostly White British pupils with others from a range of ethnic groups. The proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals and those with special educational needs are below national averages. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2012.

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

The appointment of a new headteacher has enabled the whole school community to reaffirm the Christian character of the school. This has resulted in a learning environment where Christian love, faith and hope are central and pupils are nurtured to develop academically and personally.

### **Established strengths**

- The commitment of the headteacher, leaders, governors and staff to affirm the distinctive Christian character of the school
- The impact of the Christian ethos on the personal and academic development of pupils
- The sense of belonging with the church and local communities
- Planned opportunities to create a sense of awe and wonder particularly through the use of visits and from the outdoor environment of the school.

### **Focus for development**

- Continue to raise standards of pupils thinking and achievement in religious education through informed assessment and the reinstatement of 'Godly Play'
- Ensure formal evaluation and strategic planning reflect explicit Christian values

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

The school's motto of 'love, faith and hope' fully expresses the Christian ethos and drives the daily actions of the school. Christian values underpin the practice of the school and policies are currently being reviewed to fully reflect their priority. There are excellent relationships between children and adults that nurture a sense of joy in learning because everyone is valued as a unique and equal individual. Pupils understand the Christian ethos and values of the school explaining that 'although the values are important for everyone, here they are the example of how Jesus behaved and wants us to be.' They also recognise the importance of learning about other faiths to increase understanding and respect. Pupils clearly enjoy learning and recognise the efforts of their teachers in providing enjoyable and stimulating lessons that result in successful learning. The ethos of the school and involvement in the 'Rights Respecting School' initiative, provide pupils with a secure foundation for a moral code and the confidence for taking responsibilities across the school. This includes the school council who provide a voice for pupils' opinion and ideas. The comment, 'the school is generous to allow us to improve school' illustrates the maturity of the understanding of how the school is organised. Pupils are adamant that although there are occasional fallings out, they are quickly resolved with a handshake, saying sorry and forgiveness, explaining maturely 'because no good ever comes out of holding a grudge.' Although Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development is one of the strengths of the school, recognised in a range of activities and visits, spiritual development is a particular strength. This is through effective planning of awe and wonder, the use of the range of the outdoor areas and opportunities for silent reflection during school residential visits, such as sharing the silence and stillness at Malham Tarn. Displays including the raggedy cross and doves of peace reflect the importance of prayer and peace in the school. These reinforce the distinctive Christian character of the school, often with a Bible verse and thought provoking questions. The stained glass window over the entrance is a collaborative design of children's' ideas. Children support a number of charitable causes.

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

Worship is an important aspect of daily life, especially at the start of the school week when it provides a time for children and adults to come together to share and explore a new Christian value. Children and adults refer to the messages of worship during the school day. The high profile of worship indicates how the school has successfully addressed the development point from the previous inspection. Pupil's enjoyment of worship is obvious and they listen carefully. They talk excitedly of recent developments that allow them to challenge their thinking and extend their understanding of moral and spiritual issues. For example, after the theme of hope, they understand that hope is not just about wishful thinking but hope for better life. Although there is a range of leaders for worship, a common format and rituals provides a known structure. Pupils enter the hall quietly to live music with sense of anticipation from a focus slide. They understand the significance of lighting a candle 'to show God is with us'. All pupils are engaged by the effective voice of the leader and the use of personal examples to illustrate aspects of values. Children participate through offering contributions to answers and read appropriately linked Bible passages. Prayer has a high profile in the life of the school and children describe how they use classroom prayer corners in times of difficulty or worry. They also contribute written and spontaneously created prayers in worship. Children of all ages are aware of the different types of prayer. They recognise that silent reflection is an opportunity for people of all faiths to pray to their own God. The rector regularly leads worship and pupils are confident and respectful of his presence. Visits to church enhance pupils' reverence of places of worship. The use of the school for a regular Eucharistic service for members of the church community increases the sense of belonging to a wider worshipping community. The school is currently exploring the introduction of a Eucharist for pupils. A range of evaluation procedures from pupils, staff and governors, including questionnaires and a record of daily worship maintains the consistency of worship and informs development.

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

Religious education (RE) has a high profile and is led by an effective subject leader who has addressed the development point from the last inspection. She has developed her expertise and subject knowledge and shared these with other staff. Cross-curricular links, including the use of works of art in RE support pupils learning. The syllabus, created to meet the needs of the school is based on diocesan guidelines with elements from the locally agreed syllabus. The rector makes an input into RE with role-play baptism and marriage services. The subject leader maintains an overview of the subject by scrutiny of teacher's planning and children's books. Lesson observations inform action planning which then feeds into the School Development Plan. Staff are able to use their experience of levelling of work and use examples to support their assessment of achievement. They are also more aware of ensuring that children are learning from religion. Although end of year attainment is judged to be in line or better than national expectations, the school has identified the benefits of measuring progress to further inform planning and raise standards. Pupils are beginning to use self-assessment at the end of each unit of work. The school has identified the benefits of re-introducing 'Godly Play' as a means of further developing the thinking skills of pupils. They enjoy RE and explain the importance of learning about other faiths 'to give us knowledge and respect for other people's beliefs.' They especially enjoy the focus weeks led by the Faith Awareness in Children (FACT) team. Teaching is good because of high expectation of teachers, effective planning and differentiated tasks. Ongoing evaluation by teachers enables them to modify lessons to ensure all pupils are achieving. Children understand the challenge of lessons because learning objectives are shared with them. For example, Year six pupils explored and discussed examples of symbolism, before giving thoughtful explanations of their designs for Amnesty International. Reception children listened attentively to the story of Rama and Sita before exploring and retelling the story of Diwali through a range of activities. Work in books is generally well presented, showing a range of tasks. Teachers often make written comments to which older children are beginning to respond.

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

The whole school community is fully aware of the Christian character of the school. There is a vibrant feel to the school and a sense of shared joy in service from adults in teaching children. An initial training day by the newly appointed headteacher provided the opportunity to explore and reaffirm the Christian character of the school. Although Christian values are explicit in the life of the school, the opportunities provided by the Christian Values for Schools programme has allowed everyone to re-evaluate and recognise the role of Christian values in both policy and practice. This has also ensured effective cross-curricular links with worship, religious education and spirituality. Governors are knowledgeable, supportive and challenging. They keep informed of developments in school through a series of focussed visits and informal evaluations that ensure their knowledge of the school contributes to development planning. Although the leadership team and staff have collated the current self-evaluation, governors have not had sufficient opportunity to make contributions. Their sense of belonging to a Christian community and shared commitment to continuous improvement indicates that the school has a good capacity for rapid and sustained development. Parents are proud of the school and the manner in which personal development and attitudes of pupils are nurtured. They praise the sense of community instilled by the school and the confidence of pupils in discussing matters of faith. The PTA organises a number of events for both adults and children that further develop community spirit. There are strong links with the local church, for which several pupils have begun to raise funds for restoration. The school has also developed links with the nearby Manor Mead School and participated in community carol singing.



## Judgement Recording Form (NSJRF)



**Name of School:** St Nicholas Church of England Primary School  
Manor Farm Avenue, Shepperton, Surrey, TW17 9AD

**Date of inspection:** 12<sup>th</sup> November 2012

**Type of Church school:** Voluntary Aided

**Phase of education:** Primary

**Number of pupils:** 559

**URN Number:** 125230

**NS Inspector's Number:** 137

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?	2
How effective are the leadership and management of the school, as a church school?	2
The school meets the statutory requirement for collective acts of worship	Yes
The school meets the statutory requirement for religious education *	Yes

\* Ratings: 1 Outstanding; 2 Good; 3 Satisfactory; 4 Inadequate