



St James & St Michael's Church of England Primary School



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools

Inspection Report

School address	Craven Terrace Paddington London W2 3QD
Headteacher	Mrs Valerie de Angelis
Type of School	Primary
Status	Voluntary Aided
Unique Reference Number	101132
Diocese	London
Local Authority	City of Westminster
Date of last inspection	December 2006

Inspection date	26th April 2012
National Society Inspector	Gladys Vendy (NS 299)

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

St James and St Michael's CE School is a small one form entry primary school situated in the parish of St James, Sussex Gardens in an area of one of the highest levels of deprivation in the country. Because of the cramped site class sizes are limited to a maximum of 25. The Nursery and Reception classes are housed in the crypt of St James Church. The school also serves the parish of St John's, Hyde Park Crescent with whom it has long standing historical links. 90% of pupils are from minority ethnic heritages but no one group is dominant. About a quarter of children are from asylum seeking families which contributes to high mobility. However demographic changes in the last two years has seen mobility fall from 62% to 47%. 75% of pupils speak English as an additional language. An above average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or learning disabilities is well above average. Staff mobility remains high but has recently begun to stabilise.

Children enter the school with skill levels below those expected for their age. They make good progress and levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage Two are in line with the national average. A growing number of pupils are from practising Christian families. All the main world faiths are represented.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St James and St Michael's School as a Church of England school are good.

The school is very well supported through the active involvement of the clergy. The pastoral support for the school community is very good.

Established strengths

- Through the inclusive nature of the school which values all children, pupils develop a strong sense of a Christian community that helps them to become confident and secure in their relationships.
- Supportive and growing links of the school with both parishes nurture the aims of the school resulting in very good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development
- The school is well led by the Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher who work in close partnership to promote the Christian ethos of the school.

Focus for development

- Determine a scheme of work for Religious Education which meets the needs of the children and offers clearer opportunities for creative work.
- Develop a more detailed plan for worship and establish a record keeping system.
- Formal monitoring and evaluation by the Governors of collective worship and RE.

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

The school places great emphasis on being an inclusive school that welcomes newcomers to this country. As one parent said children are made to feel safe, confident and secure. This is because the recently reviewed mission statement and vision reflect a commitment to a living Christian faith which is expressed in many practical ways. Attractive planting and the establishment of a quiet area in a corner of the playground with seating and wall statues has addressed the issue from the previous denominational inspection contributing to pupils' spiritual development. A variety of Christian symbols, artefacts and icons are sited around the school. Several ceramic mosaics based on both New and Old Testament events promote Christian values such as compassion, forgiveness and love supporting positive relationships between all groups. Pupils are polite, respect each other and their behaviour is excellent because of clear expectations. There are no school rules but children understand their rights and responsibilities and are able to articulate their understanding of right and wrong. Children take responsibility for themselves and others through buddying new arrivals, being playground friends and acting as translators. Children say there is always someone to help them and no-one feels left out. Stringent tracking procedures and good intervention strategies, including group education plans, help children at both ends of the spectrum of ability to

make good progress. Children are enthusiastic learners. A wide range of extra curricular activities both at lunchtime and after school supports very good social and cultural development. Pupils' diversity is celebrated in a variety of ways, often through themed weeks, leading to a culture of respect for all. Children and parents are generous in their charitable giving. The school has a link school in Ghana. Community cohesion is good, highlighting the links between local businesses, hotels, the parishes and school. The school has an open door policy to parents who say they feel included. Their response to parent workshops and attendance at events is growing. Information about both churches is located on the display board at the school entrance. There is mutual co-operation and both churches promote the school to the local community and offer their buildings for school activities.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is integral to the life of the school and underpins its Christian character. Acts of worship are organised by the Head Teacher on a termly basis and discussed with the clergy of both churches who work closely together. These are mostly linked to the church calendar year and are displayed on the parent and staff notice boards. However, there is little detail about the content used to develop these weekly themes and records of acts of worship are not kept. A clear weekly pattern offers pupils a range of worship opportunities led by clergy and staff. Children's descriptions of worship in the classroom showed some inconsistencies in delivery. Each week one of the oldest three classes attends one of the churches for the Eucharist at which children of all faiths take an active part through serving, reading and leading prayers. Children enjoy services in church and now participate fully with the support of parents who express the views that the values of all faiths are inextricably linked. The number of parents who attend services in school and church is growing. One parent said her visits to church give her great calmness and peace. Children have a growing understanding of Anglicanism through their relationship with the churches. The whole school attends church together three times each term and a few children receive communion whilst many others come forward for a blessing. A service for the staff is held at the start of the school year. Children are introduced to a liturgical framework which includes prayer, teaching, praise and reflection. In the observed act of worship, which was a singing assembly, children came in quietly to music from the Ionian community, sung and accompanied on the piano, by the visiting music teacher. The focus was on spring festivals. After saying the Lord's Prayer and the School Creed children showed good recall of Lent, Easter and St George's Day. Children learned about the Sikh New Year festival of Baisakhi, from a member of staff of that faith. Children were taught a hymn about the Resurrection and sang tunefully. One of the pupils read a prayer she had written. After a period of reflection children joined hands to sing the grace which emphasised the school as a community worshipping together. All children take part in worship which they say they enjoy. Governors who attend worship occasionally write and circulate a report to the whole Governing Body but as yet there is no formal monitoring or evaluation of collective worship or Religious Education.

The effectiveness of Religious Education is satisfactory

The effectiveness of RE teaching has been affected by the high mobility of the teaching staff. Various schemes of work have been trialled for use in the recent past. The RE policy lacks clarity about this aspect. The scheme in use at present is a distant local authority's agreed syllabus, underpinned by QCA units, which does not fully meet the learning needs of inner city children in a Church of England School. However, teachers feel that it gives ideas and support. RE is properly timetabled. Learning resources will be updated and increased when a decision about the scheme has been reached. The RE action plan has rightly identified the need to develop a more creative approach to the provision of RE but has not set a specific time frame for this. The RE co-ordinator works with teachers to advise, mentor and build their knowledge and confidence. Planning is monitored half termly. Other monitoring includes work scrutiny and lesson observations. Feedback to teachers tends to be verbal rather than written. A learning walk was undertaken through all phases of the school. In the Early Years RE is taught as an integral part of topic work. Some children were enjoying work on St George and the dragon whilst others were thinking about the importance of friendship – 'friends make me laugh' - 'Mary, Joseph and Jesus are special friends because they love us'. The quality of teaching and learning across Key Stages One and Two was variable. It was good when effective use was made of a video clip, as when the younger children

were learning about Moses and the ten commandments, or when children's learning was differentiated according to their abilities. In one class children had prepared questions to ask a visiting Hindu about her beliefs and in another, children were setting their poems about creation to music. Children used balloons to examine the effect of filling them with air and equating this with the movement of the Holy Spirit. In one or two classes due to insufficient pace and an unimaginative approach teaching and learning was only satisfactory. Visits have been made to other places of worship such as a mosque, a temple and a gudwara. Children of other faiths talk confidently about their beliefs and share their knowledge. Assessment is carried out half termly using the 'classroom monitor' programme to record achievement electronically. This is largely informed by teacher marking and children are not yet involved in self evaluation. The two attainment targets of learning about and learning from RE were not always well balanced. A scrutiny of children's work showed some unevenness in the marking and recording of work. Standards of attainment in RE are in line with those seen in their literacy books and are average. Children's prior knowledge is good and attitudes towards RE lessons are positive.

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

The Head Teacher shows a strong determination to promote the school as a Christian foundation and to uphold the Christian ethos. This is clear through the updated vision and mission statement that outlines the commitment of the leadership of the school to maintaining Christian values which underpin the work of the school. She is well supported by the Deputy Head Teacher and is committed to raising the quality of teaching and learning. The clergy of the two associated parishes and the active Chair of Governors are highly visible within the school community in promoting the distinctiveness of the school as a church school. This has contributed significantly to the view of local parents who now respect the school's work and see the school as a strong church school. The governing body has a number of new members who although relatively inexperienced in their role have a strong skill set and are becoming actively involved with the school. The school has a history of turbulence with high pupil and staff mobility. In response and to ensure succession much of the school's work is carried out by curriculum teams led by an experienced member of staff. These teams include teaching assistants who form a stable core of the staff ensuring that knowledge is retained and shared in the face of change. Recruitment and induction procedures are in place which emphasise the Christian nature of the school. New staff are given a buddy or mentor to support them. Staff morale is very good and relationships with each other provide good role models for the children and parents. Although there is no formal parent organisation there is a strong and growing core group of parents who actively support the school. The school is very well supported by the diocese and the local authority. The school has a determination and willingness to move forward in its role as a distinctive and effective church school.



Judgement Recording Form (NSJRF)



Name of School: St James & St Michael's Church of England Primary School
Craven Terrace, Paddington, London, W2 3QD

Date of inspection: 26th April 2012
Type of Church school: Voluntary Aided
Phase of education: Primary
Number of pupils: 198
URN Number: 101132
NS Inspector's Number: 299

Rating 1-4

How distinctive and effective is the school as a Church school?	2
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?	2
How effective is the religious education?	3
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

* *Voluntary Aided Schools*