



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St George's CE Primary School

Perry Vale
Forest Hill, London
SE23 2NE

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Southwark

Local authority: Lewisham

Dates of inspection: 26 May 2016

Date of last inspection: July 2011

School's unique reference number: 100721

Headteacher: Geraldine Constable

Inspector's name and number: Shaun Burns 808

School context

St George's CE School, (formerly Christ Church,) is an average sized inner-city primary school. It is placed amongst a group of large housing estates, private housing and temporary housing. Most pupils are from minority ethnic groups, many having English as a second language, there are 28 languages spoken throughout the school. An above average number of pupils receive SEN support. There is high mobility and many face deprivation and challenging circumstances. Many pupils are Christians, although only a few attend St George's Church. There are also Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs. The school is currently being expanded. OFSTED recently judged it Good.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St George's CE School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- a relentless and unwavering mission to support and develop the wholeness of every pupil, guided by the recognition that all are precious and equal in the sight of God, ensures each pupil achieves their full potential
- the school's innovative work on learner qualities, underpinned by distinctively Christian values explicit in the fabric of the school, leads to highly independent effective learners
- spirituality is understood across the school community as a dimension to nurture and opportunities are consistently given that develop this deeply within a Christian context

Areas to improve

- strengthen the skills of the new Religious Education (RE) subject leader to lead the continued development of the subject as a highly-effective core contributor to the school's Christian distinctiveness
- establish a strong relationship with the new incumbent to continue and further develop the extremely beneficial partnership between the church and its school

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

In St. George's self-evaluation, an aim of the church school distinctiveness is stated as '... all children are seen as equal in the sight of God and each individual child's needs are addressed and barriers to learning are recognised and addressed.' St. George's unremittably delivers on this, ensuring all are made to feel they are of worth and can excel. Distinctively Christian values, adopted by the whole school community, underpin it and clearly influence day-to-day life. The physical environment sings of these values as does what goes on inside it. Everyone recognises these unmistakably make the school unique. Firmly rooted in the vibrant Christian faith of the school, they deeply influence the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of all pupils. The majority of pupils start school well below age-expected levels, but numerous interventions and individualised support ensure that they leave at or above those levels. All pupils make good, often very good, progress in all aspects of their development. In recognition of the Christian calling to serve all, the school employs, full-time, a highly respected and effective parent advisor. She supports families in need to ensure their children 'thrive and achieve'. As a result, attendance has risen to being in the top 10% of all schools and no pupils are excluded. 'It is our Christian faith that guides us as to why we invest in it for all', said one member of staff. Behaviour and relationships throughout the school are built on the Christian values, resulting in a cohesive community. 'We accept each other even if ... we have different religions, we still love each other,' said one pupil. Pupils recognise Christianity is a world-wide faith, both from each other and projects like The Bishop's Lent Call when they collect for Zimbabwe. RE is clearly used as a tool which supports and strengthens the effect of faith on the school's Christian character. In turn this guides pupils' respect towards difference. A shared enthusiasm towards RE and the challenge that it evokes impacts markedly on the SMSC attributes of pupils.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Great worth is placed on Collective Worship, which is felt by stakeholders as 'setting the scene' to what the school does. Worship is firmly rooted in the Bible to illustrate Jesus' teaching of the Christian values, thereby developing a deep understanding of him. Themes based on these promote the experiences of living them out. Worship skills are being developed, a former focus for development. For example Key Stage 2 plan and lead the weekly worship previously led by the vicar before the current interregnum. This is one example of many where the school positively sees challenges as opportunities. During inspection, Year 6 led thoughtful worship on love. Good understanding of the Trinity was shared with the rest of the school, enriching other pupils' understanding, challenging everyone to live out love. 'It's a valuable time in school, it helps you think', said a member of the Children's Faith Group. Reflective opportunities stir and nurture personal spirituality. 'It makes me feel nearer to God', said another pupil about reflecting on worship in her reflection journal. Prayer boxes contain prayers left and shared by members of the school community. One pupil had brought another pupil to the headteacher asking for her to pray with them for that pupil at a time of need. Accordingly reflective and personal prayer is recognised by all as contributing to each other's spiritual journey. All staff lead worship, having been supported with training for this. Use of candles, an altar, liturgical greetings and responses familiarise pupils with Anglican practice. This is also developed through the enrichment of worship in different settings including the church at key Christian festivals. St. George's Church hosts and leads annually 'The Big Event' for leavers of local Church of England primary schools. They gather to worship and consider issues of transition to secondary school. This collaboration with the church firmly places a time of change within a worshipful and faithful context. The school has introduced an annual Eucharist and Baptismal Service at the church, another former focus for development. All Key Stage 2 pupils have the chance for preparation and to be baptised and admitted to communion. This commitment to faith by some pupils shows fruits of mission. The Faith Groups monitor Collective Worship, receiving feedback from pupils, staff and parents. They use this to guide future planning and development. Insightful evaluation shows that significant impact is undoubtedly felt by all members of the school community.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE is placed at the heart of the curriculum and given core subject status. This prominence enables it to be a central element of the school's unique Christian character. Pupils understand the value of RE and learn outstandingly well. They build up strong knowledge and understanding of Christianity along with some awareness of other faiths. One pupil talked of how, on television, he had watched people being wrongly stereotyped about their belief, but RE helped to teach people what the truth was. 'Here there are different faiths in school, it's good to know how they feel,' said another pupil. Individual pupil books and class RE books tell the story of creative RE throughout the school. Pupils are able to imaginatively apply learning to what it means to them and others. Teaching and learning is accurately monitored, showing teaching to be consistently good or better. This enables pupils to develop a wide range of skills that they bring to understand the impact of faith upon believers. They can also make links between religions. Feedback marking of work leads pupils to respond by developing their thinking further. An effective assessment system informs teachers' planning, addressing an area of development. All learners make good progress in RE with a significant number making outstanding progress, comparing favourably with other core subjects. This ensures that standards achieved by all groups of pupils are high, with many achieving higher than national expectations. Reflection journals and high quality RE areas successfully encourage spiritual development whilst work shows deep thinking in RE. The new RE subject leader inherited a subject led well by the previous subject leader. The leadership of RE has remained high by the Senior Leadership Team ably supporting the new leader. She is growing effectively into this new role. She reports to the Faith Group who take on strategic monitoring and evaluation of the subject, holding an aspiration for continual development. This is realised in the rich RE experience for all pupils.

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

A shared vision is lived out between senior leaders and governors. This is underpinned by Christian values, built upon a trusting relationship. The combined leadership is effective because all decisions relate back to the explicit Christian vision and are made in the best interests of every pupil. Leaders and managers speak, with strong conviction, of the transformational impact that the Christian ethos of the school has on pupils and their families. Self-evaluation is accurate, there is an openness and honesty about the school, not least from the inspirational headteacher. A Pupil Safety Committee was set up in response to their fears about building going on around the school. This listening to the voice of pupils has led to improvement and helped them feel safe. The Governing Body takes responsibility for church school distinctiveness, but also faith groups specifically focus on development informed by evaluation. Links between the two faith groups are still to be developed. Governors were recently awarded 'The Bishop's Certificate in Church School Governance' as a result of training, supporting them as effective governors. Professional development successfully prepares staff as leaders in church schools. The school ensures a Christian dimension is seamlessly interwoven throughout its curriculum, giving a faith context for learning. Innovative development of learner attributes encourages independent life-long learning. Pupils become increasingly able to reflect deeply, enhancing their SMSC development. Leadership of RE and worship are given high priority. This has enabled high standards in RE to be maintained whilst personnel has changed. It has also resulted in both areas making a long-lasting positive difference to the school's pupils. The school considers pupils' families, the parish church, diocese, local and wider communities as being partners in learning. It draws upon these resources to enrich the lives of pupils. The previous incumbent made a deeply-felt impact, leaving a strong link between church and school on which to further build. In this period of much change for the school, a constant is the Christian faith upon which the school is built. This is resolutely secure to help this newly-named school keep its specialness and from its infancy, sustain its growth and further development as St. George's Church of England Primary School.