



St Paul's Tower Hamlets Church of England Primary School



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools

Inspection Report

School address Wellclose Square
 London
 E1 8HY

Executive Headteacher Mr. Terry Bennett
Chair of Governors Mr. Ian Graham

Type of School JM&I
Status Voluntary Aided
Unique Reference Number 100959
Diocese London
Local Authority Tower Hamlets
Date of last inspection 2nd July 2008

Inspection date 26th March 2013
National Society Inspector Miriam Rinsler (NS 591)

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. Paul's CE School is a one form entry school with a nursery which serves the diverse community of Wapping. The proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals, who speak English as an additional language, who have learning difficulties or disabilities or who are from minority ethnic groups are all well above the national average. It enjoys a very supportive relationship with its parish church, St. George's-in-the-East.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Paul's Tower Hamlets as a Church of England school are outstanding

St. Paul's constantly reviews its nature as a Christian school in a largely Muslim community. While it respects the sensitivities of this community, the school derives its strength from Christian principles, which are explicit in its vision and ethos. The school achieves impressive levels of achievement and progress for all groups of learners. Teaching and assessment in religious education (RE) are outstanding overall. Due to outstanding support for their moral and spiritual development, learners show high levels of care and respect for each other.

Established strengths

- Centrality of prayer to life of the school
- Quality of relationships between all members of the school community
- Quality of teaching and learning in RE
- Leadership of interim executive headteacher, who is also RE and worship co-ordinator, and the senior team

Focus for development

- Through regular exploration of Christian values with all stakeholders, further strengthen the school's distinctive character as a church school in its multi-faith community

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

A learning-focused, inclusive ethos based on principles of doing one's best, care and respect underpins the excellent support children receive for personal development and the very high standards of behaviour. While respecting the Muslim community's religious sensitivities, senior staff and governors show how Christian values, while not always explicit, do underpin practice. Staff members of different faiths actively support the school ethos and Muslim parents select the school because "religion is taken seriously here." Learners from all cultures represented show confidence and happiness, and say that their beliefs are respected. In addition, knowledge of other faiths is valued - for instance, Muslim pupils readily contribute to lessons, and cheerfully correct teachers' pronunciation of Arabic. The ethos makes a significant contribution to the excellent progress learners achieve, both academically and in spiritual, moral, social, cultural and citizenship development. Although most learners arrive with few skills and little English, by the end of Year 6 standards are well above national norms. Support for new arrivals and those with learning difficulties is very good. Both groups make equal progress with their peers over time. Parents greatly value the school and readily support events, including religious ones. They particularly appreciate the wide range of courses available to them, as well as the clubs provided for pupils. Although most children are of other faiths none are withdrawn from RE - and only one from church visits. Staff members offer excellent role models, resulting in courteous, well-motivated and happy children. The school environment is continually redeveloped as an excellent tool for learning. Many displays in corridors and classrooms relate to RE topics or celebrate core values. Pupils are proud to explain the school logo and its relation to the school's original foundation for poor seamen's children.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship has an outstanding impact on learners' spiritual development, derived from clear leadership and shared conviction. Whole-school worship is well-organised - based on Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) issues and the liturgical year - with clear, appropriate themes. Through frequent visits to the parish church of St. George, and weekly worship taken by the rector, learners begin to experience and understand the Anglican tradition. This was evident in a lesson observed with Year 5 pupils who were learning about the Stations of the Cross with the rector in church. They used

pictures researched by the class teacher, and all adults worked with the learners to increase their appreciation of the Good Friday story. Worship is consistently and recognisably Christian whilst remaining sensitive to the beliefs and traditions of other faiths represented in the school community. For instance, there is no set position to assume for prayer, but all adults model deep reverence. Children of other faiths therefore feel included, and all learners have very clear ideas about the rôle of prayer in the school day and more widely in their lives. They say they use prayer times to show their respect for God, to give thanks and show their appreciation. They like to receive blessings. Confident communal singing and a respectful silence set worship apart from ordinary school time. As a result, learners show very good attitudes: they listen carefully to staff or child leaders and can recall worship sessions - giving reasons why they were memorable. Learners are proud to contribute by reading prayers or scripture and particularly value class or Bible assemblies where they act out stories and answer questions. There are good systems in place for all stakeholders to monitor worship more formally in the future.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Teaching and learning in Religious Education (RE) are outstanding overall and learners make similar progress to that in other subjects. From low starting points on entry to the school, learners progress rapidly and by Year 6 standards in RE are high - in line with other core subjects. When teaching is outstanding, as in two lessons seen, there is skilful use of high quality resources, sensitive pace, and challenging questioning. There were careful links with literacy, so that in the pupils' minds, learning to make meaning is linked to the meaning of life. This results in very high standards of writing in RE. Staff show very good subject knowledge and skill in tackling complex issues even with the youngest children. For instance, a Year 2 lesson on how symbols work. Through the use of the local diocesan syllabus, there is good coverage of five other main world faiths in addition to Christianity. Learners show good recall of stories and activities from RE lessons and particular interest in comparing religions, saying that this teaches them more about their own faith. They are clear that the education they receive and what they learn about Christian values such as friendship, community and service, prepare them for life. RE makes a very good contribution to learners' understanding of diversity. Staff subject knowledge ensures a very good balance of learning about religion as well as learning from religion and all lessons refer explicitly to both to ensure this takes place. For instance, a Nursery lesson, where, while acting out the events of Jesus' passion, the learners were asked to relate this to themselves and what they would have felt. Understanding the lesson, but unable to say this in English, most pupils made signs instead. A strength is teachers' consistent use of marking to generate learning from religion through challenging questions or opportunities for empathy. Because they are given time, learners respond sensitively to this. Class tracking procedures already in place have led to very effective yearly action plans. Building on this, the school has started to use a closer system of assessment which will bring practice fully in line with literacy in its accuracy and detail.

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

Senior staff and governors have a clear vision for the inclusive yet Christian nature of the school. This forms part of the atmosphere of energetic self-evaluation and improvement in all areas of its work. Staff and governors continue to work on how the school's Christian foundation can best be expressed in its multi-faith context. Learners have a clear voice through the school council and can show areas of school life they have improved. The leadership of senior staff has a very good impact on behaviour and the learners' enthusiastic attitudes to school. The executive head, as subject leader, has ensured that RE has the status of a core subject. The school is actively considering succession management so that RE leadership can be devolved. There are close and supportive links with the attached parish of St. George in the East. In addition to the weekly worship, and some teaching, the rector is a frequent visitor. The school makes a significant contribution to community cohesion through the excellent extended services it offers parents and through liaison with other churches, services and Diocesan schools across London. In particular, the school has supported another local church school through the executive leadership of the headteacher. The self-evaluation of the school is accurate with a clear sense of its strengths and areas for development. Governors receive reports by the subject leader regularly to allow them to monitor RE and worship. There were no issues for development at the last inspection, and all the outstanding features remain. All staff show firm commitment to maintaining quality and very good capacity to improve further.



Judgement Recording Form (NSJRF)



Name of School: St Paul's Church of England Primary School
Address: Wellclose Square, London, E1 8HY

Date of inspection: 26th March 2013
Type of Church school: Voluntary Aided
Phase of education: Primary
Number of pupils: 223
URN Number: 100959
NS Inspector's Number: 591

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

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