

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

The Green
Totteridge
London
N20 8NX

Diocese: St Albans

Local authority:	Barnet
Date of inspection:	22 nd November 2011
Date of last inspection:	June 2009
School's unique reference number:	101327
Headteacher:	Helen Lockham
Inspector's name and number:	Alan Thornsby NSIN 137

School context

St Andrew's is an average sized primary school. Pupils are predominantly White British, with a range from ethnic minority backgrounds. There are 25 different languages spoken and about half the pupils speak English as a second language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average while the proportion entitled to free school meals is below average. Since the last inspection there has been an almost complete change in teaching staff.

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

The high profile Christian ethos that permeates the practice and policy of the school and the increasing profile of religious education results in a school where pupils understand the impact of Christian values on their behaviour, attitude and achievement.

Established strengths

- The vision of the headteacher, shared by everyone
- The impact of Christian values and worship on the behaviour and attitudes of pupils
- The commitment of the new RE coordinator to raise the status and standards of religious education.

Focus for development

- Ensure an effective system of evaluation for worship
- Continue to raise standards in religious education through a the use of differentiated tasks and effective assessment
- ensure that all stakeholders are involved in rigorous evaluation of the schools distinctive Christian ethos

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

The school has a welcoming and caring ethos that is based on a set of values, agreed by staff, governing body and pupils. These values, explored over a two yearly cycle have secure links to the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) and Christian values that inform worship themes. Pupils readily relate to the values such as love, peace and happiness explaining 'our values represent the way God wants us to be, like a big happy family.' Many of them make comparisons with values, recognising that love and respect results in compassion as do need and action. They are very aware of others less fortunate and often instigate charity fundraising, for example after the Japanese earthquake. All pupils have a 'values' book where they express and comment on their personal responses to values. There are good relationships throughout the school because of the well-understood behaviour incentives and sanctions, including weekly 'golden time'. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because of the range of out of school activities and the opportunities for pupils to share their own faith and cultures This is underpinned by the recently introduced creative curriculum that gives challenge and support for all groups of pupils. Prayer areas in each class, and displays such as the banners celebrating two hundred years of church schools and those recognising pupils 'caught' sharing a value, reflect the distinctive Christian dimension of the school. This is further developed through the use of purple labels that indicate a Bible verse or links to Christianity, such as the 'Footprints' poem.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.

Worship is a key part of the school day, described by children as 'a time to come together and praise God at the beginning of each day.' Themes are based on SEAL, securely linked to Christian values using 'a Teachers Dozen'. Termly meetings that give opportunities for liaison with lay readers enable saint's days and festivals to be integrated. Pupils explore the different aspects of each value and links to Bible stories that are often acted out. They make good use of stillness and reflection to consider worship themes and impact on their own lives. Children experience a range of worship formats that include singing praise and celebration assembly where the impact of values on behaviour and achievement is recognised. There is a respectful atmosphere for worship with pupils singing quietly as they enter. They are engaged by the rapport with the leader, the effective use of slides and the shared greeting. Pupils contribute prayers and recognise the symbolism of the candle 'God made light and light is peaceful.' Pupils' experience of prayer is furthered through their contributions to the prayer folders in each classroom that are part of the prayer areas, used for personal reflection and prayer. Year six pupils enjoy the planning and delivery of a welcome service for the new reception class. This link between ages is extended when for example, Year six and reception pair up to walk to church. Although presently the church is without a vicar, the church community and clergy from other churches have maintained links with school. This has ensured a church presence in school and the use of the church for festival services. Although there has been informal evaluation and discussion of worship, the school has identified the need to establish a formal system of evaluation, to assess the further the impact of the well-established worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

Since the last inspection the school has introduced a new syllabus and explored assessment with the diocesan advisor. The newly appointed coordinator has successfully developed the work of the previous coordinator. She has used an audit of provision and views of teachers to develop an action plan that includes a cycle of monitoring of planning and lesson observations. The audit also identified a better balance across the school of learning about and learning from religion. Planning is often annotated to identify the contributions to be made by teaching assistants who are effectively used throughout lessons. There are many strengths in the quality of teaching, including the subject knowledge of teachers and their effective questioning skill that develop the thinking of pupils and pace of lessons. Pupils understand the learning objectives of lessons and make good use of opportunities for discussion to extend their religious vocabulary. Year two children explored the significance of Advent before being challenged to make their own advent promises. Year six pupils successfully identified the differences between the secular and sacred aspects of Christmas yet recognised that both shared traditional themes. Pupils from other Christian backgrounds and cultures were able to share their celebrations. Present assessment indicates that standards are generally in line with other subjects. However, the school has begun to implement a more rigorous assessment using work levelling and 'I can statements' to better inform teachers planning. Although pupils books show little differentiation of tasks for different abilities, teacher often give positive comments and challenge to pupils in their marking.

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

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and its future development as a distinctive Christian school as the heart of a community. Christian values are increasingly part of policy review and with the school ethos inform decision-making and strategic planning that includes religious education as a development area. Although the governing body is kept fully informed through regular visits and headteacher reports, they have recognised the benefits of being fully involved in evaluating the schools distinctive ethos. Personal development of all staff is a part of the life of the school and there are clear procedures for succession planning at all levels. Parents recognise the impact of Christian values on their children, making a typical comment 'our children are given the information to make mature choices. They respect each other and other faiths.' Parents also recognise the importance of the weekly newsletter keeping them informed of the current value and the links to Bible stories to enable them to share questions at home. The school enjoys good links with a local church school allowing the sharing of policies, ideas and resources. The links with a church school in a differing location allow the celebration of differences by staff and pupils. Good community links include events such as a tea party for past pupils and the sharing of experiences.