

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St George's Hanover Square Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

South Street
Mayfair
London
W1K 2XH

Diocese: London

Local authority: Westminster
Dates of inspection: 14th December 2011
Date of last inspection: 29th June 2009
School's unique reference number: 101130
Headteacher: Malcolm Lothian
Inspector's name and number: Alan Thornsby (NS 137)

School context

St George's school serves an ethnically diverse group of pupils. The proportion of those with English as an additional language is above average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, while the numbers of pupils joining or leaving the school during the year is above average.

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

Since the last inspection the Headteacher, Governors and Staff have explored and re-established the distinctive Christian character of the school. Christian values, worship and religious education are central to the academic and personal development of all children.

Established strengths

- The commitment of the leadership and management in the development of a distinctive Christian character for the school
- The secure links between collective worship and religious education that are the central focus for the school
- The extent that pupils understand and display Christian values in their daily lives
- The quality of the teachers' questioning skills in RE that elicit thoughtful responses by pupils

Focus for development

- Continue to explore and embed Church school distinctiveness as an aspect of decision making and strategic planning
- Give pupils greater opportunities to plan and deliver worship
- Ensure the newly introduced assessment strategies, including the moderation of work samples, fully inform planning in religious education
- Ensure all pupils are fully challenged in religious education by the use of differentiated tasks

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

The school has a warm and welcoming ethos of care that fully reflects the depth of understanding of Christian values by the school community. The daily life of the school illustrates how through sharing the Christian message, everyone is encouraged 'to go that bit further.' This is reflected in both the Mission Statement and School Motto. Relationships and attitudes are good because of the sense of belonging to a special community and the role models of staff. There is a vibrant sense of joy as confident and articulate pupils learn together. One pupil commented; 'our school is a peaceful school where teachers make

learning fun but push you to improve while friends help and reassure you.' This is one of the factors that enable pupils throughout the school make good progress. Pupils are very aware of belonging to a Church school and have a mature understanding of the range and impact of Christian values. Each class chooses a Christian value to explore, develop and aspire to during the year. For example, one explained; 'Koinonia means a close community friendship and team work to follow God's word and the example of Jesus.' Pupils readily relate Christian values to the teachings of Jesus, explaining that; 'Jesus taught about love in the parables of the Lost Sheep and the Good Samaritan.' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development is good because of cross curricular links and the opportunities for out of school activities that allow all pupils to make the most of their individual talents. Symbols and displays in school such as 'The Adoration of the Magi' and 'Joseph's Coat' not only reflect the distinctive Christian character of the school but further develop the thinking of pupils through the use of reflective questions.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is central to the life of school in the exploration and reinforcement of Christian values and Bible stories, enabling everyone to freely talk about God. There is an obvious impact of worship on the attitudes and behaviour of pupils. The diocesan worship calendar and themes from 'Every Child Matters to God' are integrated as weekly themes that are clearly enjoyed by most pupils. Key phrases, such as 'You are the apple of God's eye', reinforce the spiritual dimension of the school for younger pupils. Pupils have a good awareness of the Anglican tradition because of the use of the greeting, blessing and Lord's Prayer. Pupils in turn light and extinguish the candle. They have a good understanding of the meaning of 'the light of the world', explaining that 'Jesus shows the way in tough times.' They are engaged by worship and enjoy participation in role-play or reading prayers and Bible stories. Pupils explain prayer as, 'a time to talk to God and Jesus to ask for help or say sorry.' They make effective use of the outdoor 'prayer seat' and the prayer book 'to think about worries or just be quiet.' Many pupils join the weekly lunchtime prayer group. Although pupils plan assemblies based on the celebration of their class work, they do not have sufficient opportunities to plan and deliver acts of worship. The Rector leads a weekly service in Grosvenor Chapel and pupils take part in reading lessons and singing in the Carol service. Some pupils serve as acolytes in St George's Chapel. Evaluation through observation and discussion reflects how worship is developing, such as the request from pupils for more singing. Although foundation governors use formal evaluation to monitor worship, the school has recently trialled a more rigorous evaluation procedure to give a greater insight into the impact of worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious education (RE) is well led by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable coordinator who has worked very effectively to raise the profile and standards in RE through a greater focus on the needs of children. Staff are confident in their teaching because a new scheme of work has been introduced and there is on-going support from the diocesan advisor. This and the results of scrutiny of pupil books, shared by the Coordinator enables staff to annotate plans and make secure links between RE and other curriculum areas. Teachers are developing many strengths in their teaching of RE, especially in their questioning and marking that furthers the thinking of pupils. Pupils are challenged by the introduction of initiatives such as Godly Play, Art in RE and Philosophy for Children. They enjoy RE and 'the opportunities we have to learn about other religions and see how they are similar.' Pupils now pose 'big questions' such as 'if God made us, who made God?' The school has devised an assessment profile, which has recently been refined to be more rigorous and informative of pupils' progress. This indicates that although standards are at least in line with literacy in Key Stage 1, in Key Stage 2 they are better. Lessons are good because of the quality of questioning and opportunities for pupil discussion. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils were able to develop their thinking to compare the similarities of life after death in Christian and Hindu beliefs. Year 2 children made thoughtful responses to questions to explore the significance and symbolism of the Christingle celebration. Although work in pupil's books is often well presented and the high quality marking comments by teachers elicits written responses by pupils, there is little evidence of work being differentiated to challenge the range of abilities in the class.

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

Since the previous inspection the school has worked hard to ensure that practice and policy fully reflect the distinctive Christian Foundation of the School as well as the creation of a Mission Statement to embrace these. This has involved Staff and Governors exploring the distinctive nature of a Church School. It has ensured a high profile of the Christian Values for Schools website that is beginning to inform planning and decision-making, in addition to secure links with RE and Worship. Governors are now more active in their role. They have successfully addressed the developments from the previous inspection and have begun to explore other issues such as succession planning. Foundation Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development because of their frequent presence in school and both formal and informal discussions that continue to develop the ethos of the school. Governors understand the need for staff development and many join the annual staff residential INSET that gives opportunities for professional and social development. The accurate self-assessment suggests that the school has a good capacity for future development. Parents praise the work of the school and 'the way the school gives our children a sense of worth and sense of community. New children settle in quickly and gain confidence to face new challenges.' They also recognize the Christian foundation of the school and the way children share their learning from Bible stories at home. The school enjoys strong links with the local community.

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