

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

All Soul's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Foley Street,
London.
W1W 7JJ

Diocese of London

Local authority: City of Westminster

Date of inspection: 18th September 2007

Date of last inspection: November 2001

School's Unique reference number: 101121

Headteacher: Ms Alix Ascough

SIAS Inspector: Miss Gladys Vendy (NS 299)

Context

All Soul's School is situated in the heart of the west end of London. It is a one form entry school with a nursery and serves the local community. The proportion 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. The mobility rate is also above average. At least 50% of pupils are from a Moslem background. The Head Teacher has been in post since September 2006 as acting Head Teacher and became the substantive Head Teacher in March 2007. The school has been through a period of instability since the last inspection.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of All Souls School as a Church of England school are satisfactory.

The school has strong links with the church of All Souls, Langham Place through the active partnership with its community church of the Clubhouse. The newly appointed Head Teacher, well supported by the RE co-ordinator, has a clear vision for the future of the school as a distinctive and effective Church School.

Established strengths

- Close, active and effective partnership with the Clubhouse community church
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils which is clearly evident through good behaviour, high quality displays and links with the community.
- The opportunities offered for the pupils to develop skills of reflection and to learn how to pray contribute to their spiritual and moral development

Focus for development

- Raise the consciousness of the Christian identity of the school and clarify the distinctive nature of the school as a Church school
- Implement and develop the planned assessment programme with rigour so that it is firmly embedded and leads to progression and development in Religious Education
- Involve the Governing Body in the monitoring of Religious Education and Collective Worship and of the development and understanding of the school's Christian ethos

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

The school vision statement that spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all children should be within the Christian framework is fulfilled. The school vision has been explored by all stakeholders through a 'vision' tree. However the Christian ethos could be made more explicit through developing an understanding of Christian values. There is clear visual evidence that this is a church school with a candle and cross in the main hall and the high quality displays that reflect all faiths and cultures. There is a Clubhouse notice board in the entrance which details activities. The school strives to be a caring and inclusive school that serves the local community well and makes satisfactory provision to meet the needs of all its learners. The learning mentor plays an active role in supporting vulnerable and new children and ensuring that all are happy and secure in school. Relationships between staff and children are good and children are encouraged to respect each other. The clear and carefully structured 'rainbow' behaviour policy, which has recently been implemented, with its focus on reflection and forgiveness, offers consistency and has had a positive impact on raising standards of behaviour and attitudes to work which are now very good in classrooms. The Key Stage 2 school council takes its responsibility seriously and is increasingly involved in decision making. Children know who they can turn to for help and feel that problems are taken "really seriously". Partnership with parents and the community is developing. Parents feel that all pupils are valued and that through the cross curricular approach the less academic can also succeed. Some parents know that this is a Church school but are not always clear as to what this means. Clubhouse offers a range of after school activities including Bible study, football club, art club, choir. Full advantage is taken of the location of the school to further children's cultural development by working with the Wigmore Hall, the BBC, the Asia centre etc. There is good support from local businesses. Music and art are strengths of the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

There are close supportive links with The Clubhouse which is the community church of All Souls, Langham Place. The Clubhouse vicar, supported by a team of youth workers, visits the school weekly leading whole school worship and the school is included in their prayer cycle. Worship is of integral importance in the life of the school and is well planned across a three year cycle which links with RE teaching. The theme for this term is 'feed the world' and the current backdrop to the hall stage is a mural depicting the feeding of the five thousand. Questions to encourage children to think about worship topics are displayed in the hall. Worship, led by the Clubhouse Vicar challenged the children to think where God is in their lives. The presentation using a magic trick gained an enthusiastic and considered response from the children. A candle was lit for prayer time and the reflection was very good, the children being guided in their silent response. All the children accompanied by the guitar, sang enthusiastically, tunefully and with feeling. They entered and left silently accompanied by music. Acts of worship are recorded in a file which is centrally held. Children clearly enjoy worship and are very responsive. The Clubhouse runs a Bible/Assembly lunchtime club in school which works towards a termly presentation to the school. Undoubtedly the impact of collective worship on the school community is positively strengthened by the close links with the Clubhouse. Parents are invited to attend the class assemblies and this always contains time for reflection. There is an evaluation section on the worship plan and this feeds into the planning of the next act of worship but, as yet, the Governors who sometimes attend worship in the school do not formally evaluate or report upon this. Each classroom has a designated reflection table which is attractively displayed. Prayers are said at lunchtime and there is always a period of reflection in classrooms at the end of the day. The children attend the Clubhouse for Harvest festival and their team comes to the school for carols. The school has a very good choir and they regularly provide entertainment for the elderly.

The effectiveness of Religious Education is satisfactory

The RE co-ordinator was recently appointed and is enthusiastic, committed and well qualified. She is working hard to raise the status of RE within the school. A three year cycle of themes, supported by the Diocesan guidelines and the Solihull scheme of work, links collective worship and religious education. Evaluation of RE has led to the view that some themes offer insufficient opportunity for progression and development. A comprehensive action plan shows that the scheme will be redefined. There is clear long, medium and short term planning and good resource provision. The RE profile has been raised through a themed week on 'Sacred Spaces' where the question was posed 'What is it which makes space sacred?' Children visited religious buildings including those of other faiths and denominations in their locality and were supported by an Islamic storyteller who is also a parent. This resulted in high quality display work, model making and a DVD. In the classes a range of teaching styles were observed resulting in some very good quality learning. An outstanding contribution was made in all the lessons to spiritual development through focussed reflection. High level questioning, paired discussion and very good use of resources, including teaching assistants, were also distinct features. The response of pupils was always positive and they showed clear prior knowledge. In the Foundation Stage both classes based their work on the book "Handa's Surprise" and children were able to look at, identify and taste the exotic fruits. They sat quite still during reflection time with quiet music playing and they were encouraged to think about their favourite fruit and to give thanks. There was clear differentiation between the activities and outcomes in the two classes. In Key Stage 1 children were learning, through the story of the garden of Eden, that God is the creator and provider of food. All children were able to contribute to the making of a prayer picture and this was done calmly and reverently. Children understood that 'still on the outside means still on the inside'. This lesson was enhanced by children singing appropriate harvest songs, accompanied by the guitar, at various intervals which helped to sustain their concentration and enthusiasm. In the upper junior class the theme was developed through challenging children to consider our use of the earth's resources. The story of Zacchaeus helped the children to understand the concept of change and they were encouraged to empathise with his feelings. Opportunities for reflection were inbuilt during the lesson. In all classes a good pace was set, children's views were valued and learning objectives were achieved. Work has begun on recording discussions, drama, non-written and creative work in a class book, sometimes by the teaching assistant during the lesson. Children say that they enjoy RE teaching because it is imaginative and thought provoking, it gives them time to think and reflect and they enjoy learning about other religions. Other faiths are well taught and there was plenty of visual evidence to support this. Hitherto, little assessment has been undertaken but the RE co-ordinator has now planned for this to be implemented. Not all teachers have secure subject knowledge and work scrutiny and individual planning showed some inconsistencies. As yet the Governors do not monitor, evaluate or report on RE teaching.

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

The quality of leadership by the Head Teacher has been instrumental in re-establishing the school as a Christian community following a period of instability and uncertainty. She is well supported by the Senior Leadership Team who compensate for their lack of experience in determination and enthusiasm. The Chair of Governors and Vice Chairman, together with active foundation governors, have established a close working relationship with the school leaders. Several new governors, whilst being supportive and active in the school, are as yet unclear about their management roles and responsibilities in a Church of England School. Clergy and youth workers are also actively involved in the life of the school. The Head Teacher has raised the consciousness of the Christian ethos of the school by giving governors, staff, children and parents the opportunity to think about their vision for the school and to add their suggestions to a 'values and vision tree'. This should now be taken forward to further clarify what is understood by belonging to a Church School. The parents spoken to are very happy with the care and education their children are receiving. Recruitment and induction procedures are in place which emphasise the Christian nature of the school. There

is a programme of events to support pupils as they embark on their transition to secondary school including an introduction to the services and youth activities at Clubhouse. The school is very well supported by the diocese and the local authority. The school is highly sensitive and effective in endeavouring to ensure that provision is made for the spiritual and moral development of its entire community. Recommendations from the previous inspection have been taken into account and satisfactory progress has been made in most areas. The school has a good capacity to move forward in its role as a distinctive and effective church school.

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September 2007