

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Bishop John Robinson Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Hoveton Road  
Thamesmead (North)  
London  
SE28 8LW

#### **Diocese: Southwark**

School's Unique reference number: 100181

Date of inspection: 10 and 16 June 2008

Date of last inspection: June 2005

Head teacher: Andrew Redman

Inspector's name with National Society inspector's number : Sue Jackson NSI 410

### **School context**

Bishop John Robinson is a one form entry primary school which serves an area of Thamesmead in south east London. Half of all pupils are from Black African backgrounds and a significant number speak English as an additional language. A large proportion of pupils are from families who attend one of the local Anglican or Pentecostal Churches. The Religious Education subject leader is on long term sick leave, her role is being shared between the head teacher and vice chair of governors.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bishop John Robinson as a Church of England school are good.**

Bishop John Robinson is a good school with many outstanding features. The inspirational leadership of the head teacher together with the outstanding teamwork of all staff and governors results in a happy, hard working community with a vision subscribed to by all. The school's strong Christian beliefs and values are encapsulated in the mission statement: 'Within a Christian ethos, we care, we prepare for the future, we promote excellence'.

### **Established strengths**

- the use of the school environment to communicate the distinctive Christian vision that underpins the school's ethos
- the prominence given to Collective Worship resulting in the enthusiastic response of all pupils
- the way that Religious Education (RE) lessons extend and enrich the knowledge of the Bible
- the clarity of Christian vision shown by the head teacher and his inspirational leadership which has enabled the Faith Team to use self evaluation to take the school forward

### **Focus for development**

- support the Spiritual development of pupils by providing opportunities for them to reflect on their experiences
- broaden the scope of the monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship and involve pupils in the planning and leading of acts of worship
- carry out a review of the RE curriculum in order to address identified issues

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

Most pupils enjoy school and are proud of its Church school status. They feel valued and appreciate the fact that their achievements in and out of school are celebrated. Behaviour is generally good and pupils are very clear about the school's system of sanctions for occasions when behaviour is inappropriate. All staff provide excellent role models and support the pupils' developing sense of right and wrong. Key Stage 2 pupils spoke of all adults in school being fair and teaching being good; 'there are loads of good teachers, they are fair and make subjects interesting'. Christian teaching forms the basis upon which the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development of pupils is approached and the recently implemented policy for this contains very useful definitions of each area. The school has a purposeful, happy atmosphere and relationships at all levels reflect the Christian values of the school. Parents are welcomed into school and recently a Parent Council has been established. They appreciate the variety of after school clubs and the provision of a breakfast club and pupils are also enthusiastic about the opportunities offered by them. A very small minority of pupils are from other faith backgrounds or none. Although currently no pupils are withdrawn from Collective Worship or RE the school does not take into account the views of these pupils sufficiently. The place of prayer is central to the day to day life of the school. The role of the chaplain nurtures this in many ways. He leads Morning Prayer at 8.15am weekly in the library in the centre of the building and the focus of a crucifix and candles is a constant presence throughout the week. The Christian vision of the school is also clearly communicated by the high quality displays in classrooms and around the school and by the presence of Christian signs and symbols throughout the building. Following successful Lent and Advent Prayer Groups for pupils, prayer boxes have been introduced into all classrooms. Pupils speak of their importance to them though the school intends to develop these further. Pupils are involved in raising money for charities both locally and in a wider context. This aspect of school life is reactive rather than proactive, as the school acknowledges. A link with a school in Zambia, facilitated by the team rector, is therefore being developed.

**The impact of Collective Worship on the school community is outstanding.**

Prayer and worship are at the heart of Bishop John Robinson School and the content reflects its Christian foundation. Pupils describe the worship as being one of the things they like about the school and prayer as the feature that makes their school distinctive. Pupils from Key Stage 1 and 2 were able to identify why Collective Worship is important in the life of the school and how it helps them personally. It was described by them as being part of Bishop John Robinson's tradition and the importance of everyone worshipping and praying together was acknowledged. Pupils enjoy singing, listening to stories from the Bible and elsewhere and in particular, learning about the morals behind the stories used. They appreciate the fact that Collective Worship makes them think, especially when they are asked to consider a dilemma. For example, the recent theme of honesty has, in their opinion, helped them to see this in the context of Jesus' teaching. Planning and preparation are thoughtful and well documented and drama and games are used effectively as well as singing, stories and times for prayer and reflection. Although pupils actively participate, this does not yet extend to their leading worship. Worship is characterised by a calm, reflective atmosphere with pupils and staff coming into the hall listening to music. Pupils display their understanding by answering questions in a thoughtful way. The Lord's Prayer was used in the worship observed and all pupils, including the youngest, were clearly very familiar with it. Plans reflect the cycle of the Church's Year and festivals are celebrated and liturgical responses used. The excellent displays near the doors to the hall further enhance pupils' understanding of the Church's Year and other aspects of Anglican tradition. These are maintained by the chaplain and are a further example of the way that his role is contributing to the spiritual development of pupils and staff. Parents are regularly invited to worship and following the appointment of a new team rector, plans are in place to revitalise the links between worship in school and at the local Anglican church. Members of staff attend worship and are increasingly involved in leading it. The quality of worship is promoted through monitoring and evaluation carried out by some members of the Faith Team. However, this monitoring does not yet include the perceptions of staff and pupils.

### **Religious Education is good.**

RE has an important place in the curriculum and the life of the school and it promotes its distinctive Christian character. All pupils speak enthusiastically about RE, with some describing it as their favourite subject. Its contribution is highly valued by parents. Standards of achievement are good, in line with other areas of the curriculum. Teaching and learning are good overall, but there are some inconsistencies in some year groups, which include marking and presentation of work. Of the three RE lessons observed during the inspection, two were outstanding. In Year 6 pupils discussed layers of meaning in two miracles from St Matthew's Gospel in some depth and were able to consider examples of a 'leap of faith'. Teaching was characterised by probing questioning and excellent subject knowledge. It was evident from both lessons and pupils' written work that the religious background of many pupils is embraced and their knowledge and understanding built on. In Year 2, excellent questioning by the teacher enabled pupils to develop a clear picture of what life was like for Jesus as a Jewish boy growing up in Nazareth. A variety of first hand experiences such as sampling food and playing with appropriate artefacts in the home corner further enhanced this learning. Effective differentiation by skilled questioning and a variety of tasks enabled less and more able pupils to participate fully and extend their knowledge. RE makes a significant contribution to the spiritual and moral development of pupils. An interactive style of marking used which highlights this. For example, 'Why does God forgive us?' 'Because he wants to give us another chance and if he doesn't we won't go to heaven'; and 'Which forms of prayer are you familiar with?' 'Thanksgiving and supplication'. The current schemes of work have too much content for some year groups in some terms. The Faith Team's action plan already includes strategies to address this curriculum overload and the inconsistencies in teaching and learning.

### **The leadership and management of the school as a church school are outstanding.**

The head teacher is an inspirational leader who has a clear Christian vision for the school which is shared by all staff and governors. His outstanding leadership has been instrumental in accelerating the progress of change in the school. This vision is very evident in all documentation, such as the school prospectus, where the first aim is to enable children to "appreciate the Christian values of the school." The staff team is a strong and supportive one and all are involved in the realisation of this vision. There is a well established Faith Team, comprising staff, governors and clergy. The very existence of this is a demonstration of the commitment of everybody to the distinctive Christian character of the school. The Faith Team makes an effective contribution to the monitoring and development of RE and Collective Worship. Self evaluation, using the diocesan toolkit, is well established and the action plan clearly identifies how the school needs to move forward. Parents are regularly consulted about the school's Christian vision and almost all agree that it is very evident. They value the Christian teaching highly and see the school as having an important contribution to make to their children's developing spirituality. Unusually for a primary school, there is a school chaplain, who has been in post for two years. Pupils questioned during the inspection particularly mentioned the chaplain as being the adult who had helped them understand the Christian vision of the school. Links with the local team ministry are becoming stronger after a period of inactivity during the recent interregnum. In order to recognise the diversity of worshipping backgrounds that the pupils come from, links are being developed with the Ecumenical Team and local Pentecostal Churches. The school makes excellent use of the advice and support from the diocese and staff and governors take part in training opportunities.