

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Hackney Free & Parochial Church of England Secondary School

Paragon Road
Hackney
London
E9 6NR

The Diocese of London

LA: Hackney Learning Trust
Dates of inspection: 6-7 November, 2006
Date of last inspection: 4-7 March, 2002
School's Unique reference number: 100284
Headteacher: Mrs J. Barnes
Inspector's name and number: Richard T. Ford, 303

School context

Hackney Free and Parochial C of E School is an 11-16 Anglican Voluntary Aided School with Specialist Sports College Status. Of the 729 pupils on roll, boys significantly outnumber girls. The school is situated in an area of high social deprivation: around half the pupils are eligible for free meals. Nearly 80% of the pupils are from ethnic minorities, with Black African and Black Caribbean pupils forming the majority group in the school. Approximately one third have English as an additional language. Around 50% of pupils come from Christian homes, with Muslims the next biggest faith group represented. The school is increasingly over-subscribed for admission at age 11, a product of its increasing involvement in the local community - it is a full service extended school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Hackney Free and Parochial C of E School as a Church of England school is good, with some outstanding features.

The committed Christian leadership of the Headteacher and other senior staff ensure that pupils are challenged to reach their God-given potential.

Established strengths

- A highly inclusive approach in which all pupils are valued and cherished
- Pupil achievement in Religious Education
- The school's provision, as an extended school, for the local community

Focus for development

- To articulate and promote through promotional material and other documentation a distinctive Christian vision for the school.
- The Governors to develop and implement a more systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating the distinctive Christian character of the school.
- To build on the impressive work already undertaken to enhance Collective Worship in the school.
- In Religious Education, to develop and implement across the department a Key Stage 3 scheme of work that gives greater prominence to the Christian faith.

How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?

The school, through its distinctive Christian character is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners. This is demonstrated in the recent receipt of the Hackney Learning Trust Award for inclusion. Pupils feel valued and safe - they refer to there being little if any bullying – and are respected by the staff. A Muslim pupil commented that, “They treat you normally,” in comparison with the experience of Muslim friends elsewhere. Those of other faiths are able to flourish as individuals. A Muslim pupil said that the school gives her more pride in her religion. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is well supported through assemblies, Religious Education – one lesson observed made good use of music and art in considering spiritual truth – and displays. Displays in general are good. So, too, are those in Religious Studies rooms, although little of this is pupil produced. Pupils treat displays with respect. Spiritual development is encouraged through the school environment, with a statue of the resurrected Christ in the entrance hall, crosses around the school, and the recently opened Quiet Room. This contains some specially commissioned Christian artwork and furniture. However, despite the school’s extensive out-of-hours programme, there are no regular specifically Christian activities that could further develop the pupils’ spiritual awareness. Specific Christian values are, though, used in discussion with pupils about their behaviour.

What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good. Worship is clearly important in the life of the school. Senior staff take a key roll in leading collective worship, including the termly church services. Care and thought are put into the content. In a Year 10 and 11 assembly to mark Remembrance Day, there was good use made of music and visual images. Students exhibit positive attitudes to collective worship. In a Year 7 assembly observed, the hymn was well sung by the pupils. They were attentive throughout and keen to answer questions. Prayer was led by one of the pupils. Older students responded positively to the prayer in their assembly. There is a high level of active pupil participation in collective worship. However, it is not only Christian pupils who derive inspiration, spiritual growth and affirmation from the worship. Pupils of other faiths speak appreciatively of having their faith recognised in assembly and in displays. However, there is little that is specifically Anglican in the collective worship. It is sometime since the school celebrated the Eucharist. Staff do, however, refer readily to their own Christian practice in assemblies. Pupils did not recognise the word *Eucharist*, although some were able to give an explanation of *Holy Communion*. They were better able to talk about prayer. The last Diocesan Inspection had as a key issue the need to ensure that all pupils have a daily act of collective worship. The school has made considerable progress towards achieving this target.

How effective is the religious education?

Religious Education is good. Standards in RE at GCSE, taken by all Key Stage 4 pupils, are currently the highest in the school and above the national standard. This is based on sound provision at Key Stage 3. The most effective learning takes place when lessons involve a variety of learning styles to engage the pupils' interest and pupils are able to engage in group work or other participatory activities. A Year 10 lesson effectively used a spectrum debate to challenge pupils' thinking. Less successful are heavily teacher-focussed lessons. Currently there are two schemes of work being used in Year 7. One has been in use for some time; the other utilises a new series of textbooks. At its best, assessment of pupils' work is detailed and formative. However, not all assessment reaches this standard. These latter points are unsatisfactory as they impact adversely on equality of entitlement. Pupils' attitudes to RE are very positive. This is demonstrated by replies to a pupil survey in which RE was rated as their favourite subject. Pupil interviews confirmed this.

RE contributes very positively to pupils' spiritual and moral development. At Key Stage 3 moral and spiritual issues are considered in depth. A Year 10 lesson on abortion demonstrated the pupils' understanding of the subject and their ability to use this knowledge to produce coherent, relevant arguments.

RE plays a significant part in promoting the distinctive Christian character of the school. The Head of RE has worked hard to establish a Quiet Room, with a distinctive Christian ambience. He has organised voluntary student visits to a variety of Christian establishments. He has produced a very attractive aid for classroom-based collective worship: *Daily Reflections*. In curriculum terms, Key Stage 4 is predominantly Christian. However, the Christian content of the new Key Stage 3 scheme of work is currently below the recommended level.

RE has a high profile in the school. This is demonstrated by the curriculum time devoted to it, especially at Key Stage 4. It is a compulsory GCSE subject. It is well-resourced, with two teaching rooms, incorporating an attractively furnished lobby area.

How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?

The leadership and management of the school as a church school are good. The school benefits greatly from strong leadership from the Headteacher and senior staff. The Headteacher ensures that all new Governors and staff are aware of the implications of working in a church school. This is done partly through a clear statement of the school's Christian vision in the staff handbook, partly through more informal methods. However, there is scant reference in public documentation to a distinctive Christian vision for the school. Neither the Vision Statement nor the Mission Statement in the prospectus makes reference to a Christian vision; there is only a brief reference to "developing mature Christians" in the Building Schools for the Future vision document. There is, however, a reference to "implementing Gospel values" on the school's web-site and to the "creation of a Christian ethos," but this is not articulated further. The Headteacher and senior leaders do make reference to their Christian faith in collective worship. The Headteacher makes a point of taking a leading role in termly church services. Shared Christian values are used in challenging unacceptable pupil behaviour.

Currently, however, the Governors have no systematic way of monitoring and challenging the realisation of a Christian vision.

Staff are valued in that they lead collective worship. They have also been invited to join the Ethos Focus Group, currently considering collective worship. The Head of RE has been well supported in the development of the Quiet Room. However, there is no specific provision for the spiritual growth of the staff, although they do join in acts of collective worship.

The school is very good at involving a range of stakeholders in evaluating the school's progress. One pupil commented, "You get your voice heard here." There are regular surveys of parental and student opinion. None of the questions, however, refers to the Christian dimension of the school.

Since the last Diocesan inspection, the Governors have addressed all the key issues.