

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Clement Danes Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Drury Lane,
London,
WC2B 5SU

Diocese of London

Local authority: City of Westminster

Date of inspection: 27th February 2008

Date of last inspection: June 2004

School's unique reference number: 101127

Acting Headteacher: Mrs Sarah Taylor

SIAS Inspector: Patrick Regan (N.S. 68)

School context

St Clement Danes is a one-form entry school with nursery. More than two thirds of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Almost half of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils in receipt of free school meals is above average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is average. The current substantive headteacher is on maternity leave and has recently resigned. Her role is being covered by two acting headteachers on a secondment from another Westminster C of E school. A new headteacher appointment is currently being sourced for September 2008.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Clement Danes as a Church of England school are good

There is a strong Christian ethos evident in the school. Christian values are embedded in the school mission statement which is rooted in a commitment to inclusivity within a caring Christian environment. The school has strong links with three local Anglican Churches and clergy.

Established strengths

- The strong Christian ethos evident in the school in which all pupils feel valued.
- The strong links with the local churches.
- The excellent relationships that exist between all stakeholders.
- The way Christian values are rooted in all school policies.

Focus for development

- For the school to fully evaluate its distinctiveness as a Church school.
- Review the effectiveness of the current scheme of work for RE.

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

The Christian ethos in the school is very strong and permeates every aspect of the school's life, from the displays, documentation and through to classroom practice. Every opportunity is taken to identify the school as a Christian community. There are worship focus areas and RE displays in each classroom. The multi-purpose hall adapts for worship with an altar scene with drape, bible and a cross. There is a real commitment to every child through an inclusive approach where pupils from all cultures feel valued, safe and happy. The staff are mutually supportive of each other and the children and uphold the school's Christian ethos which impacts on the spiritual, moral and social development of pupils, which is very strong. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent because of the excellent pastoral support that the school provides. The school has a very strong relationship with three local Anglican churches and their respective clergy and is developing even closer links with St Paul's Church. Both the clergy and lay people of these Churches contribute in a rich variety of ways. Local church events are publicised on the school notice board and in the school newsletter. The school benefits from financial assistance provided by the St

Clement Danes educational foundation which funds various projects and meets the costs of maintaining the outside of the building which is normally met by parent contributions. In turn the school supports the local churches and community very well.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is clearly considered as of central importance to the life of the school. It is seen as providing a period of calm and reflection within the school day for the whole community. There is a clearly defined weekly pattern for worship, attended by all staff. Worship is well planned which upholds the Anglican tradition and the Christian year and there is sensitivity shown to the beliefs of others. Pupils say they enjoy worship because 'we learn to understand each other'. They show respect for each other and for other beliefs and cultures, and SMSC is enhanced at every opportunity. Monitoring of worship notes that pupils respond enthusiastically and are confident to share their own ideas, beliefs and perceptions. Pupils enter the hall quietly; they are devout, sing enthusiastically and can recite the Lord's Prayer. A candle is lit to show God's presence and as a focus for prayer and reflection. Worship is led by staff and clergy and evaluated by the headteacher and parish priest. Major Christian festivals are celebrated in the local churches. The annual historical and community festival of Oranges and Lemons is celebrated at St Clement Danes Church. A church service is also held to mark the year 6 leavers event where children are presented with a copy of the Gospel and reminded that the Church will continue to be there for them in the years ahead. Pupils perform their annual nativity play in the Royal Opera House.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

RE is coordinated by the interim headteacher who monitors the subject rigorously. Planning is monitored weekly and teaching is monitored half termly. The school makes good use of the Solihull scheme and future plans include the adoption or incorporation of the new diocesan scheme of work. Attainment in RE is at least in line with national and age related expectations and assessment procedures are firmly embedded. Achievement is celebrated at every opportunity through the Golden Book and celebration tickets linked to the school Golden Rules are used to reward individuals. All classes display children's work, often chosen by pupils as work they are proud of. Regular RE inset meetings take place and resources are well chosen and organised. At the time of inspection all classes were studying the Easter Story. Year 2 were understanding why the Cross is an important symbol to Christians through events on Good Friday. Year 5 were enthusiastically acting out events from Palm Sunday from different points of view. Year 6 were identifying some of the emotions connected with the Easter Story in a sensitive and intelligent way. In all lessons observed children were interested, enthusiastic and motivated, older pupils were able to discuss issues in an intelligent and sensitive way. RE is very well resourced with a good range of topic boxes, books, posters, cd-roms and artefacts. All teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge and selected and used resources well to make lessons stimulating.

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

The acting headteachers, who are the head and deputy of a neighbouring Church of England school, have a clear Christian vision for the school. They work well together and ably supported by the deputy head have maintained stability and provide good direction. The school's Christian purpose is clearly expressed in the mission statement which is at the forefront of the prospectus, school policies and communication with parents. Staff are well supported by the local clergy and foundation governors in a variety of ways that include facilitating church visits, training in class worship providing spiritual support and visiting the school to observe RE lessons. The school maintains very good links with the Diocesan Board through ongoing staff training, support for the interim headteacher arrangements and in the recruitment for a new headteacher for September 2008. RE teaching and worship are reported to the Governing body annually. Self evaluation systems are in place but the school has yet to fully evaluate its distinctiveness as a Church school. The school has a strong sense of community and strong relationships with parents are built through regular coffee mornings and the parents' forum they feel well informed and supported by the school. One parent stated 'that the school is a caring and nurturing Christian community which came to the fore when my child was diagnosed with speech difficulties'.