

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Saint Faith's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School,

Alma Road,
East Hill,
Wandsworth,
London,
SW18 1AE.

Diocese of Southwark

School's Unique reference number: 285953

Dates of inspection: 7th/8th November 2006.

Dates of last inspection: 25th June 2001.

Name of Headteacher: Mr. Stephan Cook

Name of Chair of Governors: Mr. A. Pearson-Gee

Inspector's name with National Society inspector's number : Mr. Arthur Williams 279

School context

The school is situated in the Tonsleys area of Wandsworth, near to Clapham Junction Railway Station. The school is a one form entry primary school with a Nursery, with about 170 learners presently on roll who are drawn from the local area. 36% of the learners are eligible for free school meals with over half coming from minority ethnic heritages. A minority of learners attend local churches.

The Foundation Church, Saint Faith's was closed two years ago, and the school is now linked to Saint Anne's Parish Church.

The school is set in an attractive modern building, which in turn has been recently developed through internal improvements and the renewing of playground facilities.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Saint Faith's as a Church of England school is good.

It has many strengths. It is confident and proud of its Christian foundation and day by day lives out the Christian Gospel by valuing every member of the school community.

Established strengths

- The strong and distinctive Christian ethos, particularly the happy and welcoming atmosphere and the positive relationships between learners and between staff.
- The strong ownership and living out of The School Belief Statement by staff, governors and learners.
- The strong focus across the school of learners applying religious beliefs to their everyday lives.
- The excellent leadership of the headteacher, supported by a committed staff and governors, in promoting a clear Christian vision for all the school community.

Focus for development

- To further challenge the more perceptive Religious Education (R.E) learners.
- To further raise the present good standards of class acts of worship.
- To broaden the leadership and management of the Religious Education curriculum.

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

On walking into St. Faith's you are left in no doubt that this is a Christian School. A dramatic display informing you of the life and death of Saint Faith immediately catches your eye, while on an adjoining wall is a wooden plain cross. In every class there is a celebration of R.E. work and striking displays celebrating diversity, such as the learning that took place in Black History Month. However the most important witness is in the happy Christian atmosphere of the school. All learners are valued, learners play and work happily together and visitors are made welcome. This has been achieved by the sharing and acting out of the common values as stated in the school's written Statement of Beliefs. This statement was agreed this term

and has the strength of belonging and owned by everyone since staff, governors and learners were consulted and made contributions. The statement has a strong inclusion principle and this is acted out in the way that staff think and plan carefully for all learners, particularly those with special needs. Staff know the learners well, and continually challenge learners to do their best. Every class has an atmosphere of security, calm and respect. The learners enjoy school and are quick to acknowledge when good things happen, for example the provision of play equipment at playtimes, the quick way the headteacher sorts things out, such as repairing the taps for washing. A significant contribution is made by learners in developing the Christian character of the school. For example, learners are being consulted on a new school motto. One learner's striking contribution "Stand firm, follow your heart" was clearly drawn from the example of the life of Saint Faith which had been recently researched by the school community. Parents and carers recognise this positive attitude and virtually all say their child is happy at school and have confidence in approaching staff with any concerns. Another strong feature is the Christian commitment to continually improve, much has gone into raising standards and improving the school environment, yet there is a continual debate on how can we still do things in a better way.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.

The school gives a high priority in providing quality collective worship. A new policy was drawn up this year. The policy clearly influences practice by establishing clear aims, establishing themes for each half-term and ensuring that visiting leaders of collective worship take acts of collective worship that are consistent with school practice. Learners enjoy the acts of collective worship and value the time to think, pray and sing. Last year the school introduced weekly class acts of collective worship which are taken by the class teachers. At their best they exploit the advantages of having a smaller group of the same age range. The Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) worship, allowed learners to discuss the way they are cared for when they go to bed at night, the teacher giving value to all their responses. The Foundation Stage also keeps a manageable written record of their acts of collective worship including the learner's responses. This enables them to reflect on their practice and influence future plans. The headteacher is pro-active in modelling very effective examples of good whole-school and class acts of worship. However there is a variation in the experience and confidence of staff, which leads to inconsistent quality. The opportunities for prayer is a school priority. The learners have recently been reflecting on the structure of The Lord's Prayer, and learners recite it with confidence and understanding. The school is very effective in making links between acts of collective worship and the work in the classroom. An example of this is how the older learners used the structure of The Lord's Prayer to write their own prayers. A significant number of parents appreciate the fact that their children have the opportunity to pray during the school day. The incumbent of Saint Anne's takes a regular fortnightly act of collective worship and he appreciates following the set pattern of themes so that his act of collective worship is consistent with the aims of the school. The Spinaker organisation, a Christian organisation that promotes quality religious work in schools also take a fortnightly act of collective worship and they too are guided by the school's policy. Learners experience the benefit of belonging to a wider Christian community by visiting Saint Anne's Church to celebrate the major Christian Festivals.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious Education is good. The school has made the teaching of R. E. a priority. Recent inset has focused on challenging learners to apply their knowledge to their own lives and this has had a significant impact in every class. Older learners were able to ground the message of Christmas in the needs of the homeless, another class studying Judaism were able to explain their own moral choices when studying the 10 commandments and younger learners were able to apply the waiting message of Advent to their own lives. One learner applied the Sermon on the Mount to her own life and wrote, "Jesus told us not to worry. This is difficult because there are so many things to do in so little time you think you might do it wrong." Other learners were able to show strong skills of empathy with Bible characters. One learner wrote as Mary on her journey to Bethlehem, "I'm so tired, it's boiling hot, my whole body is weak, I can't move, I'm so exhausted,.... I wish I could be in Bethlehem." However there is no overall assessment structure for recording learners progress and this means that the more perceptive learners are not always identified and challenged. Another strength of R.E. is the use of a wide range of appropriate teaching strategies. The use of drama, art, discussion, speaking and listening, ICT, and writing were all observed allowing the subject to be

accessible to all learners. Teachers were very skilled in using previous work to engage learners. Very good class management skills were seen. For example, teaching with pace and having materials readily available, meant that little time was needed to bring learners back on task. This meant that learners clearly enjoy their lessons and gain an interest in the subject. The management of the curriculum is backed up by a clear scheme of work. The R.E. co-ordinator, who is the headteacher, monitors lessons and role-models good practice. While this works very well at the moment, it is denying a future potential leadership opportunity from the other staff.

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

The leadership and management of the school, as a church school is outstanding. The very strong leadership displayed by the headteacher is the key reason why so much recent progress has been made in establishing a happy school based on Christian values. The present headteacher has been in post for nearly a year and he has succeeded in creating a school that is proud and confident in its Christian status. He has done this by a hands on approach, setting his own excellent examples of good practice and monitoring lessons. He has been quick to identify issues around the teaching of R.E. and assemblies, in particular the need to make the subject alive and relevant to learners. However this has not been a one man show. He involved the whole school community in writing the school's Statement of Beliefs and the other key people in drawing up the new Collective Worship Policy. He also involved both staff and learners in researching the story of Saint Faith and the whole school community by having a celebration day for Saint Faith in October. In this he has been supported by a very effective deputy headteacher and a hard working staff. The Governing Body have given their support with a core group actively involved in improving the school. The strong leadership of the headteacher is recognised by learners and parents. Learners value his acts of collective worship and the way he gets things done. Parents and carers appreciate the fact that he is available to talk to by being in the playground before and after school. Above all the strong personal Christian faith of the headteacher has given him the vision of a school community that can live out the Christian Gospel.

SIAS report November 2006 Saint Faith's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Wandsworth, London, SW18 1AE.