

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St James Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Woodside Avenue,
Muswell Hill,
London,
N10 3JA

Diocese of London

Local authority: Haringey

Date of inspection: 12th December 2007

Date of last inspection: 11th June 2003

School's unique reference number: 102136

Headteacher: Ms Carol O'Brien

SIAS Inspector: Angela Hopkins (N.S. 298)

Context

St James C of E Primary School is an average size primary school. The pupils mainly come from a white British background. The majority of the children are from Christian families and many of the families attend St James Muswell Hill church. The head teacher has been in post for 15 years. After a period of staff changes the present staffing is more settled.

Summary Judgement

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St James Primary School as a church school are outstanding.

Within the strong Christian ethos pupils are happy and secure. They are valued as individuals and are able to form good relationships. The teaching of RE is a strength of the school and the pupils make demonstrably good progress in all Key Stages. The management style of the leadership team contributes to the strong Christian ethos of the school. There are very strong links between the school and its parish church.

Established strength

- The excellence in the teaching of RE
- The high standards achieved by the pupils in RE
- Good relationships within the school community.
- The quality of leadership and management are outstanding
- Very strong relationships with the local church
- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school

Focus for development

- Establish a clear visual presence and exchange of information between school and church.

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

The school meets the needs of all its learners outstandingly well. The Christian character and ethos are strengths of the school and are reflected in its policies. St James' is a close-knit community and Christian values are evident in every part of the school, particularly in the quality of care given to all pupils. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. The recent Ofsted report speaks of the excellent achievement of all pupils. Both parents and children spoke of the school having a welcoming and friendly atmosphere; parents also expressed satisfaction with the strong Christian ethos of the school. The school has a strong commitment to ensuring that all pupils feel valued and supported. Whilst there are strong links between the church and school consideration should be given to a greater visual link both in school and church.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The impact of the collective worship in St James' school is very good. The links between church and school are very strong. Members of the church staff, both lay and ordained, lead worship in school once a week and are regular visitors to the school. Worship is consistently Christian and includes opportunities for reflection and prayer. The worship observed was vibrant; the pupils were attentive, keen to contribute and enthusiastically joined in the hymns and prayers. The worship reflects the Anglican tradition of the parish church. There is a clear pattern to worship and all staff attend. Although the pupils are almost all from Christian backgrounds the school is aware that they are in an area of diversity and include the acceptance and respect for other faiths in their scheme. Important events and major Christian festivals are celebrated in St James' church and involve the whole school community. There are no withdrawals from any of the collective worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The effectiveness of Religious Education is outstanding. The RE coordinator ensures that the subject is well planned, resourced, regularly timetabled and monitored. The scheme of work and assessment procedures provide a supportive structure for both teaching and learning and teachers are able to access both ideas and resources. The quality of teaching observed was outstanding and the activities were well planned and challenging. In the lessons observed there were opportunities for drama, reflection, cooperative working and imaginative writing. In a Year 6 class the children were able to discuss and reflect on the concept of "Immanuel" or God with us. They were able to give clear coherent answers and to express their own understanding of God's presence. There is a positive and consistent approach to behaviour management. As a result the pupils are attentive and their attitude to the subject is positive. They are able to speak confidently about their previous learning and to express their beliefs using appropriate religious vocabulary. The scheme of work used ensures a clear coverage of teaching about other faiths.

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

The quality of the leadership and management is outstanding and has a positive impact on the effectiveness of St James' as Christian school. Teaching and non-teaching staffs feel involved and appreciated and the relationships within the whole school community are very good. A strength of the school is the whole staff commitment to its Christian ethos and aims. Parents are also very supportive of the school's aims and are happy that the school provides a caring Christian environment which impacts positively on all learners. Parents spoke of the school's support and care for their children. The governing body provides very effective support and is active in promoting the Christian ethos of the school.