

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Saviour's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Chrisp Street,
Poplar,
London,
E14 6BB

Diocese of London

Local authority: Tower Hamlets
Date of inspection: 13th November 2007
Date of last inspection: January 2004
School's unique reference number: 100961
Headteacher: Mr Barry Porter
SIAS Inspector: Miss Gladys Vendy (NS 299)

Context

St Saviour's is an oversubscribed one form entry school with a Nursery. It was founded in 1865 and is situated in a conservation area in the heart of the East End of London. The majority of pupils live locally although a number travel in having moved from the area. The school has an above average number of pupils on free school meals but conversely has the lowest number of pupils in the local authority speaking English as an additional language. There is a diverse ethnic mix with the majority of the intake being of white British, African, Caribbean, Bangladeshi or Chinese heritage. 85% of the pupils are Christians.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Saviour's as a Church of England School are good with some outstanding features.

The strong Christian ethos is secured through the close links between the school and the parish church of All Saints. The vision and leadership of the Head Teacher and Governors play a key role in promoting this ethos which is firmly embedded in the life of the school. Very positive relationships and team work between adults and children are underpinned by Christian values. The school is effective in valuing all members of its community and academic achievement is above average.

Established strengths

- Close links between the school and the church and the leadership given by the Head Teacher and the Rector.
- Strong emphasis on team work, underpinned by Christian values, promotes positive attitudes among all members of the school community and contributes to the happy atmosphere in the school
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good

Focus for development

- Revision of the RE scheme of work to include more creativity, to incorporate aspects of the worship themes and cross curricular links
- Firmly embed assessment of RE so that it is in line with national levels
- Formalise a programme of visits and visitors to support the teaching of RE

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

The school makes outstanding provision to meet the needs of all its learners based on Christian family values which are central to the life of the school. This is reflected in the clearly displayed school mission statement that emphasises the development of a community which upholds Christian values and permeates all aspects of school life. This is also evident in all areas of the curriculum and in key policies and documentation. There are many visual signs that this is a church school. The Every Child Matters agenda is at the core of aspirations for all that happens in school. Great emphasis is placed on providing a fully inclusive education to meet the needs of all learners. Standards of attainment across the school are well above average and show a distinct upward trend. SEN pupils are outstandingly well supported. There is a broad and balanced creative curriculum and diverse activity clubs (including a Church club) allow all children to realise their God given potential and uniqueness. These also contribute successfully to promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school council provides opportunities for pupils to impact on the school environment such as playground development and the friendship shelters. Playground mediators are currently being trained. Positive relationships between staff and children are based on mutual respect and trust and a range of positive strategies promote excellent behaviour, happiness and achievement with children making sensible choices and decisions. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for actions and to "forgive and love our enemies". Partnership and communication with parents and the community is strong and parents speak confidently of the good pastoral care of the children. The school has forged very good links with another school in the authority. Global awareness is developed through cross curricular activities and by supporting a range of local, national and international charities. Children develop an understanding that the world is not always a fair place and experiences of others are often far worse than their own.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The mission statement regards collective worship as a focal point of the school's daily life and its centrality is affirmed in key documents. The clergy team are actively involved in leading worship each week, are well known to the children and contribute to the carefully planned acts of worship. There are good links between worship and RE. Music, prayer (including the Lord's Prayer) and time for reflection are always part of worship and children learn and understand the relevance of liturgical language and symbols. They understand that the lighting of the candle signifies a special time for prayer and reflection. In the Foundation Stage act of worship, which was supported by a good visual presentation, the Nursery and Reception children clearly enjoyed their action song and responded confidently to questions about talking to God, showing a very good understanding of prayer. In the Key Stage 2 act of worship led by one of the clergy, children were engaged through role play and responded enthusiastically to challenging questions. The music 'Make me a channel of thy peace' related to the theme of 'getting on and falling out' and, linked with the Christian message of forgiveness and reconciliation as portrayed in St Matthew's Gospel, provided a harmonised whole. The act of worship concluded with the children's excellent yet sensitive singing of a hymn written by a former clergyman of All Saints' Church. This hymn has also been adapted into the school prayer. Children gain a good understanding of Anglican traditions through the content of worship in both church and in school. Worship is also inclusive and affirming for non Christians. Some children have been confirmed and a significant number of children attend church on a Sunday. Spirituality and morality are well developed in worship and pupils learn to demonstrate their care and consideration for others. Children are encouraged to be aware that "God is always there and listening". Children's experience of worshipping with others is enhanced through the Diocese's Proms Praise and visits to St Paul's Cathedral. Children talked enthusiastically about worship and feel that belonging to a church school enables them "to pray, talk about God and Church and to think about God".

The effectiveness of Religious Education is good

RE is a high status subject in the school. Christ's command "to love and serve one another" is made explicit in the RE policy. It is now planned to revise the scheme of work, currently based on the Solihull scheme, to take account of the new Diocesan guidelines, the inclusion of worship themes where appropriate and to formalise the very good cross curricular links. The new RE co-ordinator, effectively supported by a Senior Teacher, has enthusiastically embraced her role as a support to others and is ready to drive forward the improvements which have been made since the last inspection. There is a comprehensive action plan to support this. Clergy are always available to advise staff on the delivery of the RE curriculum. The quality of learning and teaching observed was always good with the pupils showing very good prior knowledge and understanding. In the Foundation Stage RE is sometimes taught as a discrete subject and at other times there are very good links with the early learning goals. Children in Key Stage 1 were learning about Diwali and the story of Rama and Sita. The children engaged thoughtfully in a discussion about the triumph of light over dark and included a very good period of reflection when children sat in a circle around the lighted divas. Key Stage 2 children were helped to understand the meaning of the Christingle to Christians in preparation for the school Christingle service in Church. Children were able to express their understanding of Jesus as the light of the world. The older juniors used two Christmas cards to consider the spiritual and secular aspects of Christmas. They were able to identify religious symbols and then to compare texts from two Gospels to look at similarities and differences. The teaching of RE strengthens the pupils' understanding of the Christian faith and Anglican tradition and a variety of teaching strategies encourages the children in their spiritual development. The book scrutiny suggests that standards in RE are commensurate with those in literacy and foundation subjects. Assessment, which is currently completed at the end of each unit, is being revised using national criteria which will better secure this judgement. RE is very well resourced and each class is given appropriate artefacts to match the planning for the term and the internet programmes are well used. The teaching about other faiths is included in overall planning but few opportunities are used to visit other faiths' places of worship and for pupils to learn from representatives of other world faiths. A formalised programme of visits and visitors would enhance this aspect.

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

The quality of leadership by the Head Teacher, Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body who work in close partnership, contributes significantly to the strength of the school as a church school. The Head Teacher confidently communicates his vision of a Christian school to staff, parents, children and governors. There are very good links between staff and governors who work cohesively together to reflect the distinctiveness of the school as a Church School. This is reflected in all public documentation and the mission statement. Governors regularly visit the school to observe lessons. Foundation Governors are very active in supporting the Christian status of the school and there are distinct plans to involve them further in observing worship and RE lessons. The mentoring of the new RE co-ordinator is an example of the support that staff are given in their career. Views of parents and children are regularly sought, needs identified and analysed, communicated and actioned. The school has a long history of close involvement with the Diocese's SCITT course taking trainees, and recruiting new teachers from the Diocese although staff mobility is generally low. Links between school, local businesses, external agencies and the parish church ensure very good support for all children. The school is valued by the local community. The school's Christian character is explored at the interview stage. Staff stability is indicative of the excellent collaborative atmosphere based on the Christian teaching of valuing each other. The leadership and management of the school as a church school has been considerably strengthened by the appointment of a Learning Mentor who has enhanced the pastoral support for the children. The school is very well supported by the Diocese.