

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **The Priory Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Queen's Road  
Wimbledon,  
SW19 8LX

#### **Diocese: Southwark**

School's Unique reference number: 102672

Date of inspection: May 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> 2007

Date of last inspection: 2003

Headteacher: Mrs Angeles Walford

Mrs Fiona Duffy (Acting)

Inspector's name with National Society inspector's number : Helen Quintrell 63

### **School context**

Priory School is a two-form entry primary school situated in Wimbledon, within the London Borough of Merton and the parish of Holy Trinity with St Peter's. The Acting Headteacher led the school for most of this academic year due to the ill health of the Headteacher. A new Head has been appointed for September 2007. The school has been developed into a Primary school from a Middle school due to LA reorganisation in 2001. Learners come from a variety of faith backgrounds. Although mainly Christian, Islam, Hindu, Buddhism are also represented within the school.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of The Priory School as a Church of England school are good.**

The Priory is a good school which has worked hard to develop its distinctiveness as a church school. It is an inclusive school clearly based on Christian values.

### **Established strengths**

- Leadership team, with governor support, developing clear Christian vision and ethos of the school.
- Successful focus on Religious Education (RE) and collective worship during the academic year
- Christian values are clearly demonstrated through the good relationships within the school
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners is good reflecting the Christian values of the school.

### **Focus for development**

- Further develop collective worship to ensure all aspects of worship are included in each act.
- Ensure continuity within Foundation Stage (FS) and Key Stage One (KS1) in developing spiritual understanding of learners.
- Develop aspects of assessment to ensure continuity and progression in RE, particularly at KS1/FS.

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

The Priory School is an inclusive school and is good at meeting the needs of all learners. The mission/ethos statement underpins the school's approach, based on Christian principles, to all stakeholders and learners. For example the Behaviour Policy clearly states the importance of Christian forgiveness. Learners feel valued, enjoy school and are able to support one another. Relationships within the school are demonstrably very good throughout the school with a healthy

respect between learners and adults. Pupil voice is a strength, ably demonstrated by the School Council, who were clearly able to articulate their understanding of church school aspects. They spoke highly of the recent developments in collective worship and their appreciation of RE lessons. They clearly understood the purpose and nature of collective worship, including class based worship and hoped to further develop the music aspects of the worship. Learners of other faiths felt valued particularly as they are able to support the learning of others when their faith is a focus of the curriculum. Parents also spoke highly of the school, including a number for whom the school had not been their first choice. They appreciated the Christian ethos, including those who do not attend church, and also the very visible cultural development in the school. A wide range of extra curricular activities take place within the school, including the choir recently taking part in a borough concert performance of David and Goliath. The school supports a number of charities and the School Council discussed the importance of this aspect of their school. There was good evidence of the use of the school environment to encourage spiritual development through displays and artefacts, linked to RE themes, throughout the school. The school considers they would like to further develop this aspect in their main hall. The inspection agrees with the school's judgement that this aspect of the school is good.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Collective worship makes a good contribution to learners' spiritual development. They enjoy coming together and are clear about the purpose. The development of effective collective worship has been a major focus for the school this academic year. The Acting Head has worked closely with the Incumbent and Vice Chair of governors to ensure a clear understanding of the importance of collective worship by worship leaders. They have developed a clear programme of themes which, although linked to the Social Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme, is Bible-based and is clearly aimed at learners' spiritual development. During the inspection a class led act of worship effectively combined worship with important teaching on historical aspects of understanding God's word through their work on the Tudors. Learners spoke positively and with understanding about collective worship. Learners appreciated being included through the opportunity to light the candle each day and through the regular use of their own prayers drawn from class prayer books. They respond well to questions and appreciate being included through drama. The absence of singing (no accompaniment is available) in class based worship limits its impact, something both learners and leadership are eager to see addressed. Learners are given the opportunity to be aware of the needs of others, particularly those in the news through collective worship. Following the acts of collective worship observed, learners referred to the themes during both a School Council discussion and two RE lessons. There is an ever strengthening partnership with the local church, Holy Trinity. For example, learners took part in an Easter celebration which was led by the church community. Church and school are seeking to foster the developing links and partnership. It is clear that collective worship does have an impact on the school community. The school judged this aspect to be good overall with some satisfactory aspects. The inspection judged collective worship to be good.

### **Religious Education is good**

The standard of RE is good overall. Learners show a good religious knowledge and understanding. They are keen to contribute in lessons and listen to and encourage others' views and contributions. In the best lessons the development of spiritual understanding was effective when teachers asked key questions to aid spiritual understanding. Where best practice was observed learners were given the opportunity to reflect and discuss their ideas. A variety of outcomes was seen including role-play, written work, posters, reflective artefacts. The two coordinators, new to the school in September, have worked very closely with the Leadership Team and Vice Chair of governors to support and develop teachers' understanding and knowledge of RE and have been very effective in developing the RE Curriculum. The recently developed RE programme is based on the Southwark Diocesan Scheme but includes appropriate aspects of the Merton Agreed Syllabus. These link to the study of other faiths and together develop Christian themes such as Christmas and the Bible. Lessons have been observed and work sampled and this has is helping to raise standards. The standard of RE work sampled during the inspection

demonstrated that standards in KS2 are very good but at FS and KS1 are variable and do not always recognised the importance of the spiritual aspect. The lessons observed were satisfactory to outstanding. Coordinators recognised the need to further develop appropriate recording of learners' responses in FS and KS1. Their action plan demonstrates they are planning to develop teachers' understanding of assessing learners' response and spiritual development. However, all classes have a prayer/reflective corner in their rooms and these are used to very good effect at specific times of the day. All learners contributed to the class prayer books at least once in the year. However the prayer books were particularly effective when learners were able to contribute on a variety of themes throughout the year. The learners were very proud of their prayer books and spoke clearly about the daily use. Reflective poems and stories are also on display and used regularly. Visits to local worship centres, particularly the local church, but also those of other faiths are used to enhance the learning and understanding. The inspection agrees with the school judgement that RE is good.

### **The leadership and management of the school, as a church school are good**

The Acting Headteacher, who has taken responsibility for the school for much of this academic year, has further developed the church school distinctiveness. She has been very ably supported by members of the governing body in having a distinctive Christian Vision for the school. She has been encouraged by the Headteacher who is retiring through ill health at the end of this term. The school community has been effectively encouraged to discuss, share views and reflect on what it means to be a church school. All staff are clear about the importance and value of the distinctiveness of the school as a church school. The Acting Head has provided good leadership and clearly demonstrated the Christian values of the school. Parents and staff spoke appreciatively of the support that the leadership team provide for adults and learners. The school is part of a church school network where the headteachers meet regularly with a specific focus to support and develop their schools together. This has encouraged and supported the school in promoting the distinctive aspects of the school. The leadership and specific governors have brought about good improvement in the quality of RE and collective worship within a relatively short time scale, building on previous strengths. The leadership team are clear about the areas for further development in RE and collective worship through Self Evaluation. The RE Coordinators have been given the opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding at both subject and leadership level. The leadership has been effective in promoting the quality and core status of the school's distinctive Christian character. RE and collective worship are specifically mentioned in the Ofsted report (2007). The inspection agrees with the school judgement that the leadership and management of the school, as a church school, is good.

SIAS report May 2007 The Priory Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School  
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