



St. Matthias Church of England Primary School



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools

Inspection Report

School address	Wordsworth Road Stoke Newington London N16 8DD
Headteacher Executive Principal	Mr. Anthony Doudle Miss Sian Davies
Type of School	Primary
Status	Voluntary Aided
Unique Reference Number	100267
Diocese	London
Local Authority	London Borough of Hackney
Date of last inspection	September 2009

Inspection date	29th November 2011
National Society Inspector	Miss Gladys Vendy (NS 299)

The Education Act 2005 (Section 48) requires the governing body or foundation governors of Church of England Schools to appoint a person to undertake the inspection of denominational education and collective worship in schools with a religious character.

Context

St Matthias is a one and a half form entry school with a nursery class. It is situated in a densely populated urban environment in an area of high social and economic deprivation in the parish of St Matthias. An above average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals, speak English as an additional language and have special educational needs/or learning disabilities. Nearly all pupils have a minority ethnic heritage and the majority of these are from Black British, Black Caribbean or Black African backgrounds. 89% of pupils are from Christian families although most of the other world faiths are also represented.

Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills and abilities well below national age-related expectations and progress is judged to be satisfactory. Although results in reading reach national expectations at the end of Key Stage Two attainment in writing and mathematics remains low.

The school has been through a period of extended turbulence marked by high pupil and staff mobility including key changes in the Senior Management Team. The Head of School was appointed in September 2010. Following a period of governance by an Interim Executive Board the school has formalised a partnership with five primary schools in the area, led by an Executive Principal. The school committee constituted in September 2011 is part of the wider Governing Body of the Primary Advantage Federation.

The recent Ofsted inspection judged the overall effectiveness of the school to be satisfactory.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Matthias CE School as a Church of England school are good.

The school is now entering a period of stability characterised by improved attendance and behaviour of the pupils and the commitment of the Senior Management and Leadership Teams. The Executive Principal, The Head of School and Governors have a clear vision for the future of the school as a distinctive and effective Church School.

Established strengths

- The clear Christian vision of the Head of School, the Deputy Head of School and the Executive Principal which supports the inclusiveness of the school
- High quality displays reflect the teaching of Religious Education (RE) and the thematic approach to Collective Worship that underpin the Christian foundation of the school.
- Good opportunities for social, moral, spiritual and cultural development enable all children to progress in these aspects

Focus for development

- Develop all areas of RE including assessment, creativity, teaching methods and an increased use of assessment target two – learning from religion
- Build on children's good prior knowledge of Biblical stories to extend their progress in RE
- Increase pupils' active and confident involvement in more of the acts of collective worship

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

The school makes good provision to meet the needs of all its learners. People entering the school can immediately see from the highly visible and good quality displays of RE work, Collective Worship and Christian artefacts that this is a school which promotes Christian values. There is a well developed prayer area in the main entrance. Each classroom has a designated reflection area with a cross, books and artefacts. In the Foundation Stage this is a rainbow tent in which thank you prayers written by the children are displayed. The mission statement underpinning the key phrase 'achieve our aspirations, find fulfilment and prove potential' is well displayed in the main corridor. The school is a caring and inclusive school that serves a highly mobile population by its commitment to Christian values particularly emphasising forgiveness and reconciliation through restorative justice. These are understood by the children and re-stated frequently. As one teacher said 'we take all, love all, teach all'. Children have a very good understanding of right and wrong. The curriculum programmes such as 'success for all' where children work in mixed age groups, are

based on an ethos of co-operation that supports learning. A range of positive intervention programmes support SEN and vulnerable children well and systems are in place which demonstrate the care for each child and has built up the trust between staff and children - as one child said 'teachers care about your learning'. The needs of gifted and talented children are specifically met through sharing activities with and in other local schools. Standards of achievement are now on an upward trajectory. The school behaviour management policy, 'staying on green', underpinned by Christian values has contributed to improved behaviour and expectations. A wide range of clubs including Breakfast Club foster pupils' social and cultural development. Children have had notable successes in sports orientated activities. Children want to help and are given the opportunities to take responsibility through the school council, the food council and playground friends. Parents who are aware of the troubled history of the school speak warmly of recent improvements including better communication. Links with the church and clergy are growing. Although the school has no direct overseas links yet, the children support national and local charities and have initiated fund raising activities themselves.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Children and staff recognise the importance of worship which is at the centre of school life. Worship is well planned and recorded. Themes are set by the Primary Advantage Federation and developed, reinforced and celebrated during the week by the two senior leaders. Weekly worship has a regular pattern and includes worship in church led by the priest. This reflects the Anglo Catholic tradition of the parish and a liturgical framework is being established. Here children actively participate by reading from The Bible and leading prayers. A few parents attend. At the half termly Mass pupils are invited to receive a blessing. Pupils of all faiths respond positively to this. Weekly classroom worship is planned and monitored effectively by the head of school. His own worship leadership is monitored by the Executive Principal. Formal monitoring has not been possible because of the difficult circumstances. However at the first meeting of the school committee a link governor for RE and Collective Worship was appointed. The praise assembly observed was attended by all except the Foundation Stage who join in the Friday celebration assembly. The children came in quietly to a powerpoint presentation of 'God's amazing plan' set to music and songs. Children showed very good knowledge about people from the Old Testament and responded well to questions. Songs about Mary had been carefully chosen and reflected the theme for the week. Although all staff joined in the unaccompanied singing it lacked enthusiasm and the school has rightly recognised that the children respond better to a more contemplative style. This was a proper act of worship which closed with a time for reflection, extempore prayer, the school prayer and the Lord's Prayer. Reflection is supported by encouraging children to be 'calm on the outside, calm on the inside'. Prayers are said in most classrooms before lunch and at the end of the day. A lighted candle provided the focus for The Foundation Stage worship where children were engrossed in the story about sharing, reflected quietly and sang the worship songs enthusiastically using actions. Although the impact of worship on the community is judged to be satisfactory there are many good elements. Given the time to embed practices such as involving the children more actively and confidently in acts of collective worship and encouraging attendance by parents there is very good capacity for improvement.

The effectiveness of Religious Education is satisfactory

An action plan which identifies the areas for development and feeds directly into the School Development Plan has been drawn up. These include issues from the previous inspection which have not been fully addressed such as embedding the RE curriculum and establishing assessment procedures. High staff turnover and other national curriculum demands have adversely affected development in RE. The scheme of work is planned on a two year cycle to take account of split age classes. Teachers who are insecure in their subject knowledge rely heavily on pre planned lessons and use of worksheets which limits the use of differentiation and makes cross curricular links tentative. Work scrutiny showed that RE was taught regularly but unimaginatively using literacy strategies such as comprehension or close procedure. There was little evidence of creative work. Resources are adequate. Marking was generally good usually focussing on the learning intentions. Monitoring is currently limited to book looks. The teaching of RE in the Foundation Stage on celebrations linked with the Early Years curriculum and was of a good quality. In nearly all classes a good pace was maintained and lessons were supported by appropriate use of visual aids. The overall judgement of the quality of teaching across the school is satisfactory. However in one or two classes it was better than this because of the knowledge and enthusiasm of the teacher. An

example of this was when comparisons were made between holy books of differing faiths. Children showed good understanding of previous learning but together with their very good prior knowledge of The Bible this is not taken into account which means children's progress is not fully extended. The two attainment targets of learning about and learning from religion were not always well balanced. When they were, children could make pertinent observations such as the child who, when reflecting on the angel's appearance to Joseph, said 'The Lord knows what's best for you so you should do what he says'. Children's attitudes to RE are positive and they say they enjoy learning about other religions for whom their respect is increasing. Standards of achievement are satisfactory overall.

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

The drive and determination of the Head and Deputy Head of School working in close partnership, is having a major impact upon the provision for children. All their work is underpinned by a firm belief and promotion of Christian values which permeate all school systems and structures. They are well supported by the Executive Principal and other members of the Primary Advantage Federation which insists that each school retains its own identity. INSET at the beginning of the school year centres around the understanding of the mission statement. The self evaluation of the school as a church school was a collaborative effort and an accurate analysis of the school's current position. The newly constituted school committee of governors which includes the incumbent of St Matthias Church is leading to growing links with St Matthias Church. The Head of School has attended meetings of the Parochial Church Council to maintain the school's profile within the church. The previous high mobility of staff appears to have stabilised and restored the trust of the children and their parents in the school as a caring community. Relationships between all groups in the school community are positive. Staff work in phase teams and staff morale is good because of the clear direction the school is taking. The inclusion of the middle managers into the Senior leadership team is strengthening their professional development and understanding of the school as a church school. Surveys about pupils' responses to RE, Worship and the school as a Christian school have been carried out through interviews and the pupils now feel they have a voice and that their views are listened to. It is planned to extend this to parents in the near future. Parents are welcomed into the school and are becoming increasingly involved in school life. The school is effectively supported by the diocese and the local authority. There is very good capacity for the school to move forward in its role as a distinctive and effective church school.



Judgement Recording Form (NSJRF)



Name of School: St. Matthias Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
Wordsworth Road, Stoke Newington, London, N16 8DD

Date of inspection: 29th November 2011
Type of Church school: Voluntary Aided
Phase of education: Primary
Number of pupils: 248
URN Number: 100267
NS Inspector's Number: 299

Rating 1-4

How distinctive and effective is the school as a Church school?	2
How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?	2
What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?	3
How effective is the religious education?	3
How effective are the leadership and management of the school, as a church school?	2
The school meets the statutory requirement for collective acts of worship	Yes
The school meets the statutory requirement for religious education *	Yes

* Voluntary Aided Schools