



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Christ Church Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Byng Road, Barnet,
Hertfordshire, EN5 4NS

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: London

Local authority: Barnet

Date of inspection: 9 July 2015

Date of last inspection: November 2009

School's unique reference number: 101316

Headteacher: Elena Print

Inspector's name and number: Pamela Draycott 161

School context

Christ Church is an averaged sized, high attaining primary school. 46% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, well above the national average. 19% speak English as an additional language, slightly above the national average. 3% have some sort of special educational need. 3% are eligible for free school meals. These figures are both significantly below the national average. The majority of pupils are from Christian backgrounds. 8% come from other religious traditions and 4% from no religious background. During the academic year 2014-15 there has been considerable staffing instability. The current interim headteacher takes up post as substantive headteacher from September 2015.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Christ Church as a Church of England school are good

- The strategic leadership provided by the interim, soon to be substantive, headteacher, very well supported by her deputy, is a strength. Driving forward the school's improvement as a church school, based on Christian service, is at the heart of her strategic vision as she takes over the school's headship
- The long-standing relationships with the parish church through clergy, a lay worker and governors positively influences life in this supportive and friendly school

Areas to improve

- Refine the school's vision and values so that they effectively steer developmental priorities
- Put in place rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the school as a church school so that developments are explicitly driven by the school's Christian foundation
- Improve the consistency of standards in teaching and learning across the school in religious education (RE) so that all pupils are appropriately supported and challenged to reach their full potential in both their attainment and achievement

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

Standards are good. Pupils enter school at or slightly above the national average and leave having achieved above or sometimes well above the national average. This means that the majority make at least good progress. Whilst standards remain good, the progress of some more able pupils, has recently slowed. This is due to the staffing instability which occurred during the academic year 2014-15. However, the school is stably staffed from September 2015. There is a clear strategy in place to tackle any underachievement. The school's underpinning Christian ethos supports pupils' personal development well. Consequently, behaviour is good. Pupils are polite and confident. Relationships are caring and mutually respectful. Pupils speak highly of their school as a friendly community which values everyone, whatever their religious background. Parents are supportive of the school and its underlying Christian ethos and values. They are particularly complimentary of the interim, soon to be new, headteacher, in her leadership of the school as a church school. Pupils feel safe and are happy in school. Consequently attendance is well above the national average. Pupils respond well to the good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development provided through worship, in RE and through fundraising and extra-curricular activities. The worship programme supports and reinforces the school's Christian values. These currently include, for example, respect, wisdom, love, kindness, service and peace. Pupils speak confidently of the Christian basis of these values relating them to biblical teaching. They also recognise that they are, as one pupil said, 'base values for all religions'. They see the significance of studying Christianity and other world faiths through RE. They rightly see this as being important in helping to broaden their understanding and respect for all.

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

Worship takes place daily with good links made to the school's underlying Christian foundation. For example, through worship pupils can reflect well on the importance of being wise and making the right decisions based on biblical teaching. Worship also appropriately takes into account the Christian year through focusing on key festivals. This is extended by worship in church at Harvest, Christmas, Easter, and sometimes at Ascension, as well as for the Year 6 leavers' service. Church leaders take an active role by leading worship at least weekly. Pupils are attentive and respectful during worship. Pupils and parents have positive attitudes towards worship which is valued and enjoyed. Worship is specifically Christian but it is also inclusive of the whole school community. As one Year 6 pupil said, 'We are a Christian school so our assemblies are based on the Bible but we also respect other faiths and ways of life. That is really important'. A Year 5 pupil commented, 'Worship is important because it is about remembering God and being peaceful'. There is an appropriate focus on Jesus' life and teaching principally through celebrating festivals and through Bible stories. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of more complex Christian beliefs such as that of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Elements of Anglican worship for instance lighting a candle to represent Jesus as the light of the world, using an opening and closing sentence with a response and saying prayers, including the Lord's Prayer, are well established. Prayer is important in school life. Prayers are said before lunch as well as periodically during the school day. Staff meetings and parents' meetings now begin with prayer. Pupils are encouraged to write prayers and there is a reflection area in classrooms. Prayer is modelled by some parents who attend a prayer group in the school. A worship committee made up of pupils, the RE subject leader and the vicar, plan and evaluate the worship programme.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

The current RE subject leader is working well to support developments in RE. She, along with the leadership team, has a firm grasp on the strengths and areas for development required in RE. There is a clear action plan, developed with the help of an advisor from the London Diocesan Board of Education. It focuses accurately on key issues for development but it is in the early stages of implementation. Recent school monitoring of RE teaching, supported by inspection evidence, shows that teaching in RE is mainly satisfactory with some elements of good teaching. Standards in RE are satisfactory. Pupils are not always sufficiently supported and challenged to attain and achieve as highly as they could. This means that, particularly the most able pupils, do not consistently make as much progress as they should in RE. Pupils have a good factual recall of work previously undertaken and can usually relate this to their own lives or to the teaching of the religion being focused on. The quality of discussion work is better than that reflected in some of their written work. A recent change to RE timetabling, which will continue into the next academic year, is for it to be taught at the same time across the school. This has heightened RE's profile and importance. Practically, it allows the subject leader to more carefully monitor, evaluate and support further the quality of teaching and learning taking place in lessons. The RE curriculum provides a good balance in helping pupils develop knowledge and understanding and also reflect on the significance of religion in the world today. Pupils value RE and especially enjoy the range of activities which takes place during lessons and in the RE week which is held annually. Discussion, writing, role play, dance, debate and visits to places of worship are some of the activities which pupils report happening in RE which helps them to learn and 'makes it fun'. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but the assessments made are not consistently detailed enough.

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

The school is emerging from a relatively short but intense period of staffing instability. This impacted negatively on the overall development of the school as a church school. However, since April 2015, under the passionate leadership of the current interim, soon to be the new headteacher, there are clear signs of renewed focus and vigour. The impact of her leadership since she began work in an interim capacity, supported by an executive headteacher, is strong. Her strategic leadership is based on a vision centred on Christian service to all pupils, both academic and personal. She is extremely well supported in this by her deputy. The new chair and vice chair of governors bring an enthusiasm and expertise to their roles which encourages the whole governing body well in supporting and challenging school development. The school has correctly identified the need to review its vision and values in the light of staffing changes and as it moves forward into the next stage of its development. Leadership takes seriously the need to support and nurture teachers in working in a church school and in enabling them to contribute appropriately to school developments. Parents rightly value the school's academic success. They also value the way it supports their children's personal development. They appreciate the school's strong link with its parish church and its inclusive nature. They are extremely supportive of the recent changes to school leadership. Issues from the previous inspection have been well addressed. Arrangements for worship and RE meet statutory requirements. There are strong links with the parish church and as well as with the Diocese of London, through its school link adviser.

SIAMS report July 2015. Christ Church CE VA Primary School, Barnet, EN5 4NS