



Southwark Diocesan Board
of Education

**STATUTORY
INSPECTION OF
ANGLICAN SCHOOLS**



The National Society

Name and address of school : **Parish Church CE VC Infants' School**
Warrington Road
Croydon CR0 4BH

Type of school: Infant with Nursery

Diocese: Southwark

School's Unique reference number: 101791

Date of inspection: 23 and 26 June 2008

Date of last inspection: January 2004

Head teacher: Janet Sullivan

Chair of Governors: Revd Canon Colin Boswell

Inspector's name with National Society inspector's number : Sue Jackson NSI 410

School context

Parish Church Infants' is a large school with a nursery situated in Waddon, an area of Croydon. The site is shared with Parish Church Junior School with whom extended school status is shared. There are above average numbers of pupils from ethnic groups and the number who speak English as an additional language is also above average. Altogether 28 different languages are spoken and there are a number of pupils from other faiths. Approximately 45% of pupils in the school are from church going families.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Parish Church Infants' as a Church of England school are outstanding

Parish Church Infants' is an outstanding school with a Christian ethos which is lived out daily by all staff, pupils and governors. Christian values are evident throughout the curriculum and relationships are guided by Jesus' teaching. The outstanding Christian leadership of the head teacher, along with the support of the staff and governors, has contributed to the success of the school.

Established strengths

- the Christian teaching that is the basis for the way in which everyone respects each other's similarities and differences and celebrates them
- the importance given to each pupil's developing spirituality, Collective Worship and the effectiveness of Religious Education (RE)
- the inspirational Christian leadership of the head teacher

Focus for development

- include more specific reference to the spiritual development of pupils in the school prospectus
- continue to support pupils' knowledge and understanding of religion by extending the innovative ways of approaching the curriculum for RE already piloted in some classes

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

At Parish Church Infants' all pupils feel safe, secure and valued for their contributions and achievements. They enjoy school and are highly motivated and enthusiastic about learning. Individual differences are welcomed and celebrated; as one child in Year 2 wrote, 'Me and my friend are kind and compassionate but we don't look the same. One of us is white and the other is brown'. When asked about what difference it makes being a pupil in a church school another Year 2 boy said '.....good, because it's good to be different. It doesn't matter what faith you are, it's about the love you give to other people, to everybody'. This inclusive approach is evident in the way similarities and differences between faiths are drawn out during RE teaching. The strong staff team work together very effectively, living out the school's mission statement: 'Within a Christian ethos we care, we prepare, we promote excellence'. The curriculum is exciting and based on first hand experience. Consequently pupils are focused and behaviour is good. Parents describe how staff are excellent role models and also how they work hard to ensure pupils are happy. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all children are threads running through the whole of the curriculum and staff are committed to making learning accessible to all. The school has a system of home learning where projects are set to be completed during each holiday. This is clearly well received and is contributed to with enthusiasm by the whole family and by staff. The outcomes of the recent 'Spirited Arts' work clearly demonstrates the importance given by the whole school community to the development of each pupil's spirituality. In RE lessons seen during the inspection, pupils demonstrated their understanding of the learning intentions through role play, dance, music and song, writing poetry and art. The environment is used in an inviting, interactive way to promote the Christian vision without detracting from the reality of the multi faith community. As one parent said during the inspection 'It's not hidden, there's an appropriate balance with a strong basis of Christianity. It would be disrespectful to those of other faiths and none to be more explicit'. As well as the many displays related to RE work in classrooms, corridors and the hall, there are thoughtfully maintained reflection points throughout the school 'We go there if we're feeling sad and write a prayer'. The frequency and enthusiasm with which they write prayers is tangible evidence of the growing spirituality of the pupils in this school.

The impact of Collective Worship on the school community is outstanding.

Parish Church Infants' is a reflective, prayerful community where worshipping together is seen as an important part of each day. In the words of a Year 1 child 'We celebrate the love of God'. Pupils said that collective worship makes them think; that it helps them understand that 'God is really real' and 'Why Jesus sacrificed himself'. One pupil also said 'I have learned that some people don't believe in God, but He still forgives them'. Each day, after the lunch break, all pupils sit in pairs and take it in turns to massage each other for a brief time, following instructions from their teachers whilst listening to quiet music. This has a calming effect after being in the play ground and is a very effective way of preparing them for worship. In the hall there is a candle as a focus, a prayer bear and a display of sacred texts. In the acts of worship seen, two pupils welcomed everybody, choosing a verse from a collection kept in the hall, for example, 'We are here. Jesus is with us. He is the light of the world'. Pupils showed their involvement and enjoyment by listening attentively, singing well and responding to questions. During one act of worship children, staff and parents shared the work they had done for the 'Spirited Arts' home learning. Collective Worship is well planned and evaluated and links to the Church's year and the use of Anglican prayers and liturgical responses make links to worship in the parish church. Members of staff attend worship and are involved in leading it. Throughout the week there are a variety of appropriate groupings and venues which help to make the worship accessible to the whole age range of pupils. A member of the clergy team is frequently involved in leading Collective Worship and works with the worship co-ordinator to plan, monitor and evaluate its impact. Parents are regularly welcomed to join the pupils and staff for Collective Worship, particularly when held in the parish church. The school prospectus does not include a very specific paragraph about the centrality of collective worship in the life of the school to reflect the excellent practice.

The leadership and management of the school as a church school are outstanding.

The head teacher is an inspirational Christian leader and manager with a clear vision for the school. This is shared by everybody: staff, governors, pupils and parents. The detail of this vision is well documented in the school prospectus and the chair of governors who is also the vicar, explains to all new parents what it means to be a church school at their introductory meeting. There are effective strategies in place to review and evaluate what it means to be a church school and this self evaluation involves everybody. Parish Church Infants' does not stand still and there is a shared commitment to self improvement. There is a very real determination on the part of the staff to constantly encourage and challenge the school community to realise the Christian vision. One example is the enthusiasm with which the RE co-ordinator is developing new and creative ways of planning and teaching the subject in order to make it more meaningful to the pupils. All staff are valued by the head teacher, governors, clergy and parents. Parents are highly supportive and say that the staff show their Christian witness by caring for them as parents as well as for their children. One parent said 'They all do over and above what they have to do'.

The school enjoys extremely close and productive links with the Junior School and also with a group of schools in the same geographical area. The relationship with the Parish Church is extremely strong and is valued by everybody involved. Pupils described how the clergy, along with their head teacher, help them to understand what it means to be part of a church school. As well as visiting the church for acts of worship, pupils are also taken there as part of the RE curriculum. A child in the Nursery, following one such outing, drew a picture of the church with the caption 'My picture shows a workplace for God'. Good use is made of the advice and support offered by the Diocesan Board of Education and the National Society by both staff and governors.