



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

The Minster CE Junior School

Warrington Road
Croydon
CR0 4BH

Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding

Current SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Southwark

Local authority: Croydon

Dates of inspection: 13 November 2015

Date of last inspection: May 2010

School's unique reference number: 01790

Headteacher: Wendy Jacobs

Inspector's name and number: John Viner NS144

School context

The Minster Junior School, formally known as Parish Church Junior School, is a large junior school, housed in recently extended buildings serving the parish of Croydon Minster. Its 429 pupils are drawn largely from the immediate vicinity and reflect the rich diversity of the area. A much higher than average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportions of pupils with special educational needs and those supported by additional government funding are above average. Almost three quarters of the pupils attend church. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are around the national average. The school was inspected by Ofsted in June 2014 when it was found to require special measures. Recent monitoring visits confirm that reasonable progress is being made towards the removal of the category. The present headteacher has been in post since September 2014.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of The Minster Junior School as a Church of England school are good.

- Collective worship and prayer are the heartbeat of the school, making this a place of compassion and harmony.
- Christian values are foundational to the school and are visible in all aspects of its work, inspiring relationships and building the school community.
- The strong relationship with Croydon Minster benefits the school, the church and the community.

Areas to improve

- Review the Religious Education (RE) curriculum so that pupils learn about religions in a cohesive and developmental way and are able to apply the lessons to their lives.
- Provide subject specialist training for the RE leader in order to support her and enhance her effectiveness.

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

Although placed in a category of concern, the school has maintained its long history of Christian distinctiveness and the Christian values, which the school promotes so effectively, underpin every aspect of its life and work. Pupils readily acknowledge that the school's Christian ethos affirms them, irrespective of their faith or belief and ensures that they are safe, valued and special. Because of this they enjoy school. Most attend regularly and work hard. As a result, progress is improving and standards are gradually rising. The renewed focus on foundational Christian values places them at the heart of the school and, through the 'value of the month', pupils learn about spirituality and develop positive relationships with adults and with each other. As a result, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well, giving them an appreciation of diversity, a deep mutual respect and a developing confidence to express themselves. They say, 'it's not just what you believe – it's about your life values'. Pupils and their parents agree that this is a school where the Christian ethos has a positive impact on the way they lead their lives. Pupils are given high levels of responsibility and so make a positive contribute to the whole school community. For example, the Pupil Advocates are held in high esteem by their peers and have a genuine voice among the adults. Most pupils appreciate that Christianity is a world faith; they say that they enjoy religious education and recognise that it helps them to appreciate and celebrate difference.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is the heartbeat of the school. Pupils say how much they look forward to it and how important it has become to them. Regardless of faith or belief, pupils say that they are affirmed by worship, that it gives them time to be calm, to think and to draw close to God. Worship is both Christian and Anglican; it is Biblical and focuses on God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is carefully planned around the Church's year and evaluated by school leaders through discussions with pupils. This evaluation helps to inform future planning. Worship is usually led by the school leaders or by members of the Minster clergy team, although a range of other visiting leaders helps to keep it fresh and interesting. This ensures that pupils develop a good understanding of Anglican tradition and practice. Pupils and adults enjoy worship and are affirmed by it. Pupils' excellent attitudes to worship are evident in their reverent behaviour and enthusiastic participation. They say that 'everyone loves worship' and they especially enjoy the teacher-led acts of worship that take place weekly in their classes. They say that the close spiritual intimacy of these occasions moves them, affirms them and gives them opportunities for personal prayer. Good use is also made of these acts of worship to reinforce British as well as Christian values. Prayer runs through the school like writing through a stick of rock. Pupils have a deep and mature understanding of its nature and purpose. They say that, no matter what your faith is, prayer always draws you closer to God. There are many good opportunities for pupils to pray. Prayer Buddies, drawn from volunteer pupils of all faiths, help to support pupils' individual prayer lives. Pupils say that the buddies can help them to be calm and find inner peace. They comment that 'it doesn't matter which religion you are, you can still be a prayer buddy if you understand prayer.' The prayer boxes in each classroom enable pupils to commit their deep and private thoughts and concerns to God while they also delight in submitting prayers to be read, by them or others, in school worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

Standards in RE are in line with national expectations and, where pupils have lower than average starting points, they are rising steadily. Most pupils say that they enjoy RE because teachers make it fun, although the quality of teaching and pupil engagement is variable between and within some year groups. Teachers generally structure lessons around the development of pupils' ability to enquire and reflect but work does not always match the needs of all pupils and sometimes limits the responses of those who are more spiritually mature. This limits the progress of some pupils. Teachers understand how well their pupils learn about religion but

knowledge of pupils' personal spiritual development is less effective. Feedback to pupils is variable and does not always develop their thinking. Pupils develop a good understanding of Christianity and of the Bible. They are familiar with stories of Christian faith and some can ask deep questions relating to them. However, the organisation of the curriculum is such that pupils do not encounter other religions in a planned and developmental way so that, by the time they leave the school, they do not have the secure knowledge or understanding that might be expected. This means that they are not so well prepared for the next stage in their learning as they are in Christianity. Nevertheless, pupils do develop a good understanding of the importance of faith and respect for people of different faiths and none. Recent turbulence in the leadership of RE has disrupted its ongoing development although the new subject leader, although not an RE specialist, understands the priorities for improvement and has robust plans to address them. As a senior member of staff she is well positioned to take the subject forward.

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

Since the school was placed in a category of concern the new headteacher, key leaders and governors have worked relentlessly and successfully to drive the school forward. Together, they share and articulate a clear and ambitious Christian vision for the school that is leading to rapid and sustained improvement. As a result, standards are rising, progress is improving and the Christian character of the school has been highlighted as being of key importance. This is having a positive impact on the whole school community and there is a real sense of working together to bring about robust and long-lasting change. Leaders and governors know the school well, they plan effectively and with determination for its further development, including its future leadership needs. Parents recognise the impact of the school's Christian character on their children's lives. They like and respect the headteacher and trust her to lead the school forward. There are already good systems for keeping the school's Christian distinctiveness under review and the recently formed Faith Group offers a yet more systematic approach. The recent change to Voluntary Aided status has elevated the importance of the school's Christian character and governors are responding to the new challenge by committing to diocesan training leading to the Bishop's Certificate. The strong and effective partnership with Croydon Minster is of mutual benefit, with the church benefiting from the attendance of school families and the school drawing on the chaplaincy provided by the church. There are high levels of collaboration between church and school, through the mutual support of good causes and shared events. The chaplaincy, which the parish priest provides, serves the school, its staff and its families and so enriches the whole community.

SIAMS report November 2015 The Minster Junior School, Croydon CR0 4BH