



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Chislehurst St Nicholas (Voluntary Aided) Church of England Primary School

School Road
The Common
Chislehurst
BR7 5PQ

Diocese: Rochester

Local authority: Bromley

Dates of inspection: 7th July 2014

Date of last inspection: 28th April 2009

School's unique reference number: 101649

Headteacher: John Paddington

Inspector's name: Anne Southgate

School context

Chislehurst (St Nicholas) is an average sized Voluntary Aided primary school. Most of the pupils are from White British backgrounds and only a few are supported by Pupil Premium funding. The proportion of pupils with special needs is much lower than average. The school is oversubscribed and most of the pupils are from worshipping Christian families.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Chislehurst (St Nicholas) as a Church of England school are **Outstanding**

- The Christian character of the school enables pupils to grow spiritually, as people who think deeply and have a genuine curiosity about life's meaning.
- High attainment is driven by an ethos of mutual respect and humility, in which no-one is afraid to 'have a go'.
- Religious Education (RE) is given high status, and outstanding teaching ensures that learners achieve exceptionally well.

Areas to improve

- Ensure the explicit set of Christian values identified by the school, is deeply embedded with all stakeholders.
- Increase the opportunities for pupils and staff to plan and lead collective worship.

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

Pupils talk confidently about modelling their actions on the way that Jesus behaved. As a result, their behaviour is exceptional and is characterised by friendliness and compassion. Older pupils act as play leaders and help to teach younger pupils the school's Christian values of friendliness and compassion during play. The family atmosphere is underpinned by the pupils' understanding of Christian values, 'our school is calm because everyone understands each other and shows humility and friendship'. Expectations and achievement are high. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive. This is supported by the 'effective learner' posters, which the pupils designed. These relate the school's Christian values to learning. Pupils are remarkably reflective. They routinely take time to think and often re-shape their answers. There is tremendous respect for the views of others and so no-one is afraid to offer their ideas. Pupils relate their learning to their lives and make full use of the frequent opportunities to ask questions. One searching question asked by Year 6 of the incumbent was: 'Why is there more than one type of Christian?' The incumbent was amazed by the depth of the questions and said that he would be pleased if these had been asked by adults. Pupils are very aware both of different Christian traditions and of other faiths. In a Year R lesson pupils considered the differences between people across the world and thought about why we should respect everyone because God made us all. Older pupils are enthusiastic about their learning about other faiths. One pupil said that the lessons on Hinduism had prompted him to talk to his Hindu neighbour to find out more about her faith.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is Outstanding

The variety of experiences in collective worship ensures everyone benefits and finds relevance in worship. Worship inspires a high level of spiritual and moral reflection, enabling pupils to make connections between worship and their own attitudes, behaviour and learning. Pupils participate enthusiastically and are familiar with Anglican responses, the Lord's Prayer and Christian songs. Bible stories are consistently used in worship and are linked to the school's Christian values. These values are used as themes for worship, which helps pupils to understand their significance in the life of the school. The school makes full use of the three local Anglican churches, each with a different tradition. In addition, pupils visit the Methodist church and a parent from the Ichthus evangelical church leads worship regularly. All classes experience a Eucharist, which they help to plan. This ensures that pupils have a very rich experience of worship. Prayer is central to the life of the school. Pupils often write and say prayers during the school day and suggest prayers for the incumbent to use in church. Even the youngest pupils offer spontaneous prayers in collective worship. Parents say that their pupils ask to pray with them at home, particularly in response to illness or the need of someone at school. They say that prayer is 'a natural part' of their child's life and that the school 'feeds them spiritually'. Worship prompts pupils to support charities such as those in response to natural disasters, for example in Haiti. This heightens pupils' awareness of Christian social action. Pupils often save their pocket money to contribute to school charities, because they want to help others. Pupils' knowledge of stories about Jesus and Christian beliefs is strong as a result of the focus on these in worship. The relationship with the church is a strength of the school and is mutually beneficial. Major Christian festivals are celebrated in the church and many parents and governors attend. The incumbent says that worship has 'broken down the barriers between the church and the school'. Collective worship is the cornerstone of school life, but would be even more powerful if more teachers and pupils took a leading role in whole school worship. In classes, pairs of pupils prepare and lead worship and this is evaluated by the rest of the class. Views of parents and governors are collected to aid leadership evaluation, which lead to improvements, such as pupils who speak different languages taking an active part in the Pentecost service.

The effectiveness of the religious education is Outstanding

RE is led and planned by an outstanding leader, who is ambitious for the subject. This leads to high quality experiences, which enable pupils to make rapid progress. For example, in a Year R lesson, pupils were shown images of our world, which prompted responses of awe and wonder and enabled pupils to develop their understanding of creation. Teachers skilfully question and challenge pupils to make links between their prior knowledge, the new learning and their own lives. For example, pupils were asked to remember the creation story, relate it to the fact that God created everyone and then suggest how that means that we should treat others. This provides a high level of challenge for pupils. This ambition for pupils to reach higher levels is apparent throughout the school and results in them achieving exceptionally well. The issue from the last (SIAS) inspection to introduce level descriptors has been fully addressed and significant improvements have been made. The school is now working to ensure that work at the highest levels is recognised as such. Pupils are excited by RE as a result of the outstanding teaching. They continue to reflect and ask questions when at home. They enjoy formulating their own responses to issues. For example, in Year 6, pupils contributed well thought out answers to the question of whether the cross is the wrong symbol for Christians. Year 5 pupils considered what artists believed about Jesus, by reflecting on the images of him which they produced. Pupils and teachers show enormous respect for the views of others and pupils are challenged to justify their own views. Pupils enjoy learning about a range of other faiths and talk knowledgeably about the similarities and differences with Christianity. The time that they are given in class to think and reflect ensures that RE makes a very significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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

Leaders consistently promote a clear Christian vision for the school. This results in pupils feeling secure and valued, so that they are able to take risks and push themselves to achieve their best. The headteacher is very explicit about being a church school, but is also receptive to other traditions and faiths, thus promoting an ethos of respect and understanding. The Christian ethos permeates every aspect of the life of the school. It ensures that pupils learn to treat others with respect and that they value the differences between people. The school plays a key role in the life of the community and all understand the Christian vision on which the school is built. Further work is being done to ensure all stakeholders recognise the importance of the school's identified set of values. A particular strength of the school is that all pupils readily use the frequent opportunities to reflect and pray. This means that pupils grow spiritually as well as achieve highly. There are strong and effective partnerships with parents and with local churches. Parents of other faiths attend lessons to share their beliefs with the pupils, and there is a high level of attendance of parents at school services in church. Leaders ensure that pupils are aware of the world outside Chislehurst and pupils talk knowledgeably about world issues. For example, after an RE lesson on 'the angry Christ', pupils could relate Christian teaching to issues such as war in the Middle East. The headteacher and the RE leader attend Diocesan training, which has been effective in moving the school forward. Training is disseminated to all staff. A Christian community committee has been established and these governors lead the accurate self-evaluation of the school as a church school. Senior leaders work with colleagues in other local church schools, thereby helping to equip them as future leaders in church schools. RE is given high priority and the leader is a member of the senior leadership team. Pupils' progress in RE is linked to teachers' performance management, thus reinforcing its central role in the school.

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