



Southwark Diocesan Board  
of Education

**STATUTORY  
INSPECTION OF  
ANGLICAN SCHOOLS**



The National Society

Name and address of school: **St Stephen's CE Primary School**

Albyn Road  
Deptford  
London  
SE8 4ED

Diocese: Southwark

Local authority: Lewisham

School's Unique reference number: 100734

Dates of inspection: 14 March 2013

Date of last inspection: January 2008

Headteacher: Frances Holland

Chair of Governors: Bisi Ogunbambi

Inspector's name with National Society inspector's No: Jan Thompson 92

**School context**

St Stephen's Church of England Primary School is Voluntary Aided, with most of its 230 pupils drawn from practising Church families. The school serves its local community and pupils come from a wide range of social, economic and cultural backgrounds. The school has a very good reputation and is consistently oversubscribed. Ofsted (October 2012) judged the school to be good, with outstanding pupil behaviour and attitudes to learning. The headteacher and chair of governors are new since the last inspection, and there is a vacancy for the parish vicar.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Stephen's as a Church of England school are outstanding.**

St Stephen's has continued to improve since its last inspection, maintaining and securing its status as an outstanding Church school. The school's strong Christian values and spirituality pervade all aspects of school life. This is a worshipping Christian community with God at its heart.

**Established strengths**

- the impact of Christian values on the thinking and behaviour of all members of the school
- the deep spirituality of the school
- the high standards of Religious Education (RE)
- the strong Christian leadership of the headteacher and deputy, well supported by the governing body

**Focus for development**

- Expand the Faith Team that oversees the Christian life of the school. Include a priest from St. Stephen's Church to advise on Anglican aspects of worship, such as a school Eucharist and the celebration of Pentecost.

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

The school's Christian values of kindness, honesty, respect, self-control and perseverance are professionally displayed in the school and promoted through RE and Collective Worship. They are deeply embedded in pupils' thinking and have a profound effect on their behaviour, which is outstanding. In this multi-ethnic school, pupils from all backgrounds are included. They learn to accept differences and are bound together by the belief in 'One God and Father of us all.' This results in a happy, friendly school where every individual is valued and loved. It is also outgoing. Pupils share their love of music with the local community, and sang at the retirement service for the last vicar of St Stephen's Church. The whole school supports charities throughout the year. For example, the Year 5/6 Friendship Club organises the school's collection of Christmas shoeboxes, to be sent to deprived children abroad. The spirituality of the school is almost tangible, with pupils and staff responding enthusiastically to the many opportunities for spiritual development. Of particular note during the inspection was the Year 6 RE lesson, when pupils experienced the Stations of the Cross. These were beautifully displayed in one of the halls, with Bible readings and personal questions for pupils to think or talk about. Everyone involved found this a deeply moving experience. The school environment is well used to promote spiritual development, including the religious 'word of the week' and Bible memory verses displayed in the dining hall. Pupils' RE work is prominent in each classroom and the Bibles and Bible story books are well used. Pupils use prayer boxes around the school, and some class teachers have developed other interactive ways to help pupils to pray, such as a Post-It wall.

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

Christian worship of God is at the heart of this school and is of a high quality. Pupils and teachers fully engage with it and have opportunities to lead worship. During the inspection, the school musical ensemble of about 25 pupils played guitars, drums and flutes at the beginning of the worship. A boy volunteered to conclude the worship with his own prayer. All adults and pupils joined in enthusiastically with the singing and actions, led by pupils from the Worship Team. Each class prepares and leads an act of worship for the school once a year, and pupils often help their class teachers when it is their turn to lead worship. The monitoring and evaluation of acts of worship have led to this greater pupil involvement. Pupils say they feel inspired and uplifted by school worship. They describe it as 'joyful', 'exciting' and 'happy', as well as 'calm', 'reflective' and 'peaceful'. Pupils know that worship is offered to God and is an opportunity to thank God and 'to show how much you love Jesus'. They say it helps them 'to get closer to God' and that they can ask God for help to face life's challenges. A Year 5 pupil wrote, 'When I lost my aunt, assembly really touched me.' Collective Worship is Christian and biblical. Its themes focus on the school's values, Bible stories and also the Church calendar. Pupils' experience of Anglican worship was better when the vicar used to lead worship once a week. Since his retirement there is little that is distinctively Anglican, such as the use of set prayers, greetings and responses. Pupils are familiar with an Anglican church setting for worship because they celebrate some major festivals in church, but not Pentecost.

**The effectiveness of Religious Education is outstanding.**

Pupils' attainment in RE is well above national expectations and higher than in other subjects in the school. Pupils' sound knowledge of the Bible from their home backgrounds is skilfully built on by teachers to ensure that they make good progress throughout the school. Assessment is efficiently organised and individual pupil progress is tracked across the school, as recommended at the last inspection. Pupils are helped with self-assessment, related to the national level descriptions. At the end of many RE lessons, pupils are given forms to record what they have learnt 'about' in the lesson and what they learnt 'from' it for themselves. This makes for reflective learners. They particularly like applying religious lessons to their own lives. For example, when Year 2 pupils studied the Old Testament story of Joseph, they considered sibling rivalry and feelings of jealousy. When Year 5 pupils studied a unit on Peace, they wrote their own 'I have a dream ...' speeches for a peaceful world, inspired by Martin Luther King. RE lessons are fast-moving, exciting and interactive. Teachers plan and prepare them very carefully and intelligently, using creative resources. Pupils respond very well, covering a lot of work in a variety of ways. They find the subject interesting and talk openly about faith. The Diocesan RE Syllabus places great emphasis on Christianity, with only a few units on other religions at each key stage. Consequently, pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity is far better than their grasp of other religions. The subject-leader organises and monitors the subject very well.

**The leadership and management of the school as a Church school is outstanding.**

The headteacher was previously the deputy and she has therefore been able to bring continuity and development to the lively Christian ethos of the school that was celebrated at the last inspection. A major development since then has been the identification and promotion of the school's Christian values. This was done with the full involvement of staff and governors. Pupils were also included in discussing what these values meant in practice, and their ideas are recorded on the posters around the school. The new deputy headteacher has taken over responsibility for both RE and Collective Worship. She and the headteacher are both committed Christians and very capable leaders. A Faith Team has been set up to oversee the Christian life of the school. They have successfully addressed the 'Focus for Development' from the last report. They monitor and evaluate Christian aspects of the school very well and feed into the school development plan. Their 'Outstanding' judgements are upheld by this report. They recognise the need to expand this group to be representative of more stakeholders. The school is currently missing the involvement of the previous vicar, who was also the chair of governors. The parish church is hoping to appoint someone who is equally committed to the Church school ministry. The curate currently comes into school once a week and is well known by the pupils. There is a close relationship and mutual support between the school, the church and school families in the local community. The school is well thought of by the Diocesan Board of Education and was recently asked to showcase its Collective Worship to other Church school headteachers. The school also takes part in special services and events at Southwark Cathedral.

March 2013 SIAS report St Stephen's C E Primary School, Lewisham, SE8 4ED