



Sir John Cass's Foundation and Red Coat Church of England Secondary School



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools

Inspection Report

School address	Stepney Way Stepney London E1 0RH
Headteacher	Haydn Evans
Type of School	Secondary
Status	Voluntary Aided
Unique Reference Number	100977
Diocese	London
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Date of last inspection	July 2008

Inspection date	13 th & 17 th June 2013
National Society Inspector	John Ross (NS 476)

The Education Act 2005 (Section 48) requires the governing body or foundation governors of Church of England Schools to appoint a person to undertake the inspection of denominational education and collective worship in schools with a religious character.

School context

This is an oversubscribed school for boys and girls aged 11-18. There are 1664 on roll, including 706 in the sixth form. Most students are from minority ethnic groups, the largest group coming from Bangladeshi backgrounds. The predominant religion of the students is Islam. The school is situated in an area of high deprivation of inner London. 20% of its intake are regular worshippers at a Christian church. 60% of students are eligible for free school meals. 78% of students are bilingual. The school has specialist status for Languages and for Business and Enterprise. Since the last inspection an extensive building programme has taken place, including provision of a new independent learning facility.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Sir John Cass's Foundation and Red Coat Church of England Secondary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

This is an outstanding example of a Church of England school serving a multi-faith community. The school successfully promotes respect for all and by all its members. Consequently Christians, Muslims and those of all religions feel comfortable and confident in their faith, while respecting the beliefs of others.

Established strengths

- An integrated, inclusive faith community, in which Christian hospitality is extended to all
- The central place of Collective Worship and its impact on the life of the school
- The high quality of learning and teaching in Religious Education (RE) resulting in excellent achievement by students
- The inspiring Christian leadership of the headteacher, well supported by an outstanding senior leadership team and highly committed governing body

Focus for development

- There were no significant issues for development identified during this inspection.

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

Upon entering this school a visitor can be in no doubt that it has an Anglican foundation. The main entrance contains Christian symbols, a Bible passage and the Lord's Prayer, together with information about the parish and the diocese. Equally, one can be in no doubt that this is a multi-faith community where all are welcome and respected. Christian values such as love, forgiveness and service are extended to all. Such values feed into the whole life of the school, such as Collective Worship, behaviour in lessons and relationships in the playground. There is very strong pastoral support, with the most vulnerable being especially well cared for. The school does not give up on anyone, even its most challenging students. The Learning Support Unit provides nurture, care and support to students with a range of difficulties, including those at risk of exclusion. It is an excellent example of Christian care in action. One of the school's many strengths is the quality of relationships between those of different faith backgrounds. The well-used multi-faith prayer room, and the interfaith dialogue between students, are indicative of this success. Consequently, the atmosphere feels calm, friendly and safe. Students are confident and articulate and they have high aspirations. They are very clear about what makes the school distinctive as a Church school. This is a very high achieving school. Academically, students make outstanding progress. Significantly, no groups are disadvantaged in their achievement. There is a very wide range of extra-curricular activities and school visits, including trips abroad, which make a strong contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC). Language College status has provided the opportunity for students to learn about cultures other than their own. With generous funding support by the British Council and other sponsoring bodies, no student is denied the opportunity for travel on financial grounds. Many local, national and international charities are supported. Student voice is strong, with groups such as the school council making a difference. The large and successful sixth form attracts both students who have previously studied in the school and others who transfer in from other establishments. They say they feel welcome and like being in an environment where faith is taken seriously.

The impact of Collective Worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective Worship is central to the life of this community. It is meticulously planned and well led by the recently appointed lay chaplain. Collective Worship takes many forms. Once weekly the whole school meets together in the Great Hall. On other days there are year group, Key Stage and tutor group acts of worship, so that students experience a wide variety of situations. During the inspection, two acts of tutor group worship were observed. Here, students were observed to be calm, engaged and respectful. A great strength is the manner in which Collective Worship is inclusive, so that there are no withdrawals. Students appreciate the time of morning prayer, led by the headteacher through the public address system, when the whole school is united. This is a time of calm and reflection for everyone. Indeed, prayer is central to the life of the school. The multi-faith prayer room is used regularly and effectively. Every Friday lunchtime several hundred students, as well as staff, gather for Muslim prayers in the sports hall. Significant events in the Christian calendar are celebrated in local churches, as well as important school events, such as Founder's Day. As a successful response to the previous inspection, Eucharistic worship takes place regularly at St Dunstan's Church. All students from a Christian background are invited to attend and many do. A particular strength is that Christian students are invited to bring along a non-Christian friend as an observer, and again many do. In this way, Christians can celebrate their faith together through Anglican practice while non-Christians can discover more about what Christians believe and practise. This is an excellent example of the school's success in bringing together those of different beliefs and backgrounds within its community. The school has plans to extend Eucharistic worship to take place more frequently, both in church and in the school. Students frequently devise and lead acts of worship. Many students, including both Christians and non-Christians, have a well-developed understanding of the person of Jesus Christ and the Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Music makes an outstanding contribution to Church school distinctiveness. The choir sings regularly at special events in local churches, including singing recently for the Queen.

The effectiveness of the Religious Education is outstanding

RE has improved significantly since the last inspection. Students now begin the study of GCSE RE in Year 9, a positive response to the previous inspection. All students take an examination in GCSE full course RE. In 2012, 84% achieved A*-C and 35% achieved A*-A. This is well above national figures and compares favourably with other core subjects in a high performing school. All groups achieve well, with no groups disadvantaged. At A-level in 2012, 100% gained A*-E, with 96% gaining A*-C. RE is a very popular choice at A-level, with over 100 students studying the subject. RE is taught by well qualified and highly committed specialists. Teaching and learning are always at least good; much is outstanding. During the inspection, all teaching observed was confident, enthusiastic and conveyed high expectations. Students are confident in expressing their ideas using appropriate religious language. They are knowledgeable about the Bible and other religious texts. In one lesson observed, Year 10 students were challenged to think imaginatively and creatively about the complex ethical issue of genetic engineering. They responded by developing their own views through discussion, with excellent opportunities for collaborative learning. In a lesson about religious buildings, an excellent range of tasks was used to stimulate Year 9 students into active participation and discussion. In all lessons observed student behaviour was exemplary and their attitudes positive. Through regular and effective assessment using subject levels, students have a clear idea of their current performance level and how they can improve. The curriculum is appropriate and engaging. Through it, students gain a clear understanding of Christianity as well as other major faiths, particularly Islam. There is an excellent range of visits to places of worship, including St Paul's Cathedral, St Dunstan's Church and Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh places of worship, a successful response to the previous inspection. RE is very well led by the subject leader, fully supported by a collegiate department, whose staff train and support future RE teachers. RE makes an outstanding contribution to Church school distinctiveness and students' SMSC, including their understanding of beliefs and practices of those from different backgrounds, cultures and faiths.

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

The headteacher, senior staff and governors provide outstanding leadership of the school. They have successfully created an environment which meets the needs of all members of its community, the majority of whom are not Christian, while being uncompromising on the school's Christian identity. For example, the Founder's Day service, which takes place in a local church, celebrates the school's foundation as a Christian school. Senior staff are highly visible around the school. Governors are highly qualified and extremely committed. They challenge and support the school's leadership to strive to raise standards further. Self-evaluation as a Church school is robust, accurate and thorough and drives development planning. Arrangements for Collective Worship and Religious Studies meet statutory requirements. Staff are well supported in their own professional development and in developing their own spirituality. There was recently a Eucharist for staff in St Dunstan's Church. One non-Christian member of staff described the school as 'a brilliant Church of England School,' adding 'I can practise my religion here.' Parents are delighted with the school and their children's progress. Parents feel all staff are approachable, whether premises staff or the headteacher. The local community makes regular use of the school's facilities. The school provides considerable support to other schools, both primary and secondary, and across borough boundaries. Such experience helps prepare colleagues as future leaders of Church schools. Links with the local church, deanery and diocese are exceptionally strong. The excellent partnership with St Dunstan's Church and its incumbent is a successful response to the previous inspection. The London Diocesan Board of Education has provided substantial advice and practical assistance. The Bishop of Stepney has visited the school. The recent appointment of a theologically qualified Christian lay chaplain is a strong statement of intent in further promoting the school's Christian character. The school expects to appoint a Muslim chaplain in the near future who, together with the Christian lay chaplain, will further strengthen the school as a multi-faith community.

SIAMS report June 2013 Sir John Cass's Foundation and Red Coat Church of England Secondary School, Stepney, London E1 0RH



Judgement Recording Form (NSJRF)



Name of School: Sir John Cass's and Red Coat Church of England School

Address: Stepney Way, Stepney, London, E1 0RH

Date of inspection: 13th & 17th June 2013

Type of Church school: Voluntary Aided

Phase of education: Secondary

Number of pupils: 1673

URN Number: 100977

NS Inspector's Number: 476

Rating 1-4*

How distinctive and effective is the school as a Church school?	1
How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?	1
What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?	1
How effective is the religious education?	1
How effective are the leadership and management of the school, as a church school?	1
The school meets the statutory requirement for collective acts of worship	Yes
The school meets the statutory requirement for religious education	Yes

** Ratings: 1 Outstanding; 2 Good; 3 Satisfactory; 4 Inadequate*