

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Schools Report

### **Coulsdon Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Bradmore Green

Old Coulsdon

Surrey

CR5 1ED

**Diocese:**

**Southwark**

School's Unique reference number: 101792

Date of inspection: 23 and 24 November 2011

Date of last inspection: June 2007

Headteacher: Hilary Grainger

Inspector's name with National Society inspector's number : Daphne Gibbs 210

### **School context**

Coulsdon CE Primary is an oversubscribed one form entry school situated in a relatively prosperous area in the south of the borough of Croydon. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also below the national average although the number on school action plus or with a statement is above. Approximately a third of families regularly attend a church.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Coulsdon CE Primary as a Church of England school are outstanding**

Coulsdon CE Primary School's strong leadership team and dedicated staff promote a distinctive creative Christian ethos. All are valued and difference celebrated. Collective Worship reinforces Christian values and allows time for reflection and fun. Religious Education (RE) is relevant to the world of today and provides a stimulating platform for spiritual and moral development. All aspects gel together to create an atmosphere where the school community can grow 'together in mind, body and spirit'.

### **Established strengths**

- the warm Christian ethos which respects each learner as an individual, appreciating their talents and needs
- the inclusive leadership and management which seeks to involve the whole school community in the continuing development of their Church school
- Collective Worship which allows the opportunity for reflection and prayer but is also fun
- RE which is relevant and encourages understanding, respect and spiritual and moral growth

### **Focus for development**

- finalise a format for the assessment of RE which is informative and manageable and which will aid teaching and learning
- improve a part of the outside environment to provide an area for reflection to encourage spiritual growth

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

The pupils of Coulsdon CE Primary School are fiercely proud of their school. They feel it creates an environment where they can flourish as individuals. They talk of 'amazing help to understand and sort things out' and of teachers who 'treat us like friends not just pupils' and 'who care for each and every one'. 'Christian values are the backbone of the school' was one stakeholder's viewpoint. The pupils are given clear boundaries. They are encouraged to work through problems by reconciliation. They are always given a second chance. Children who have experienced difficulties in other schools have been transformed. Deeper thinking is encouraged. Relevant religious, world and local issues are increasingly discussed with honesty. All views are respected so giving the pupils tools to understand the world around them and become responsible and informed citizens of the future. Relationships between all members of the school community are strong. One member of staff wrote 'I am proud to work at this school. We have a wonderful team all with the same objective – the children'. The chair of governors spoke of the honest Christian relationship she has with the headteacher. Since the last inspection, when a focus for development was to 'consistently promote the Christian character of the school in classrooms', each classroom now has a designated area. Christian symbols, books, artefacts and children's work are displayed. Seating is also provided creating a space for reflection. Corridors and the hall contain more references to the Christian character of the school including a prominent Collective Worship focus area. Particularly effective are the fabric banners proclaiming the school's mission statement. The outdoor area, however, has not yet been utilised in the same creative way.

**The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

Collective Worship is an intrinsic part of everyday life at Coulsdon Primary School. It creates a 'feeling of togetherness' as one of the governors put it. It is many faceted, fun and creative. The headteacher used jelly babies (once called peace babies) to illustrate the concept of peace! The children are given many opportunities to be involved. In the two worship sessions observed pupils danced, sang enthusiastically, shared art work and prayers and readily answered questions and shared ideas. They see Collective Worship as a special time where they are safe and calm 'because Jesus is always with me'. It is also an inspirational time where they can learn 'what you can do taking the example of Jesus'. An atmosphere of reverence and calm is created. Candles are lit. Christian greetings exchanged. All these elements combine to encourage spiritual growth and affirmation. The incumbent feels his 'main role is through Collective Worship'. Much of his input reflects Anglican faith and practice. He recently did a series of worship sessions on how the Church grew and developed. The pupils appreciate his contribution. They say he has taught them 'that we have had the opportunity to live because Jesus died on the cross for us'. In response to the focus for development in the last inspection report ('formalize the monitoring and evaluation of worship'), evaluations are written and discussed, parents' opinions are sought, governor visit forms completed and the recently formed Faith Group monitor, with input from the headteacher, deputy head and incumbent.

**Religious Education is outstanding**

The improvement in RE has been outstanding. Standards are as good as in other core subjects and in some cases better. At Key Stage 2 standards at Level 4+ exceeded those in maths and English. Constant monitoring is carried out by the RE co-ordinator – questioning, book scans, consultations with the Faith Group. Observations of RE lessons were undertaken in all classes. Lessons were good to outstanding so confirming that the focus for development from the last inspection ('raise standards of teaching and learning in RE across the whole school to match existing good practice in some classes') is being met. Good progression across the year groups was demonstrated. A wide range of creative approaches, styles and resources were used encouraging the children to address the issues under discussion. RE is a valued subject and an integral part of the school's distinctiveness. Cross curricular links are in place. RE is considered to be an important component of whole school improvement initiatives so illustrating further its high

status within the school curriculum. The Big Question has been introduced in RE. This means focusing on Attainment Target 2 and encouraging deeper thinking and the ability to reflect. This is contributing well to the spiritual and moral development of all learners. World and local issues are honestly dealt with, other faiths studied and different places of worship visited so promoting community cohesion through an understanding of and respect for diverse faith communities. The enthusiastic shadow RE co-ordinator has established an RE room on 'Fronter' (Managed Learning Environment) where pupils can express feelings and share ideas. The children are very enthusiastic about the subject. One pupil actually said 'I don't think you can improve RE in our school'. Lessons are fun and allow 'you time to think about Jesus and God in a relaxing atmosphere' said another. Teachers respect the contributions made by the children whether right or wrong and acknowledge when ideas are better than their own. The school has trialed several forms of assessment from which data has been calculated. A final decision now needs to be made on a format which is both informative and manageable.

### **The leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding**

Banners and displays proudly proclaim the school's vision statement – 'Together - growing in mind body and spirit'. This was developed by staff and governors and the whole school community are aware of it and appreciate they have a part to play. It has been commented on in the summary of all stakeholders' viewpoints. The children have been encouraged to give their own personal definitions on the 'Fronter' website, one example being 'it is where we are altogether and we are growing taller and our spirit is coming out of our body growing into a much older and responsible person'. The headteacher is seen as a role model by the children – 'she encourages you to be a good Christian and follow the way of God'. Strong, inclusive and effective leadership encourages participation, celebrates achievement and identifies areas for improvement. The 'Growing Together Plan' is already thinking of the future and feeding into the School Development Plan. Succession planning for staff and governors is under serious consideration with input from the Diocese. The shadow RE co-ordinator will soon be taking over the subject from the headteacher. Honest conversations have taken place and the governing body unselfishly realizes they are growing leaders of the future who might leave the school but they feel this is part of their Christian duty. There is a positive and sympathetic relationship between St. John's and the school. The incumbent sees himself as a sounding board. The school uses the church for services and as a resource. It is supporting another local church school and has links with several local secondary schools. Partnerships with parents are very positive. The leadership and management of Coulsdon CE Primary school provide a realistic, accurate self assessment of the school. They are not complacent and have already identified actions required for further improvement to take place. The school therefore has the capacity to improve, develop and grow even more as a Church school. As the chair of governors put it Coulsdon CE Primary may be a 'small school but can still make a difference'.

November 2011 SIAS report Coulsdon CE Primary School, Bradmore Green, Old Coulsdon, Surrey CR5 1ED