

ST AIDAN'S

Voluntary Controlled
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Albany Road
London N4 4RR

T: 020 8340 2352

F: 020 8341 2320

E: staidan'sprimary.school@haringey.gov.uk

Headteacher: Mrs Rosetta Dyer B.Ed (Hons), NPQH



Understanding our VC status

A brief history of the school

During the 19th-century, very few children went to school so the Church of England created schools in huge numbers to offer a basic education to the poor.

In 1887, the Church opened a secondary school for girls on Church land – our school's current site. The school was built by the Church Schools' Company and within a few years became known as Saint Aidan's.

In 1944, Parliament passed an Education Act which introduced education for all and the State began to build and run its own schools. By that time, many of the Church schools were in a poor state of repair and so the State offered these schools a choice: they could either continue to be maintained (funded) by the Church (to become known as Voluntary Aided, or VA) or they could opt to be maintained by the Local Authority (Voluntary Controlled; VC). In both cases they remained Church of England schools run with a distinctive Christian ethos.

St Aidan's had by then become too small to continue as a secondary school so in 1949 it opted to become a VC primary school run by the Local Authority, Haringey. Ownership of the land and buildings was transferred to Haringey with the exception of the ball court which remains on Church land.

Interestingly, until recently St Aidan's was the only Church of England VC school in the whole of the Diocese of London. All the other Church schools were Voluntary Aided whereas in the rest of the country the preference was for VC status.

Answers to some frequently asked questions

The Governors are aware that there is some confusion about the status of the school so have prepared this document in an effort to clarify the position and answer the questions that sometimes come up.

Q VA and VC schools – what's the difference?

In Voluntary Aided schools:

- the Church controls the school – it appoints a majority of governors;
- the school (Church) controls admissions and employs the staff;
- the school receives extra funding from the Church;
- the Church controls the Religious Education syllabus;
- the Church can influence the curriculum.



In Voluntary Controlled schools (St Aidan's):

- the Church does not control the school; it appoints a minority (3 out of 15) of governors;
- the local Authority (Haringey) controls admissions and employs the staff;
- the school receives no funding from the Church;
- children are taught a multi-faith Religious Education syllabus and acknowledge and celebrate world faith festivals;
- the Church has no influence on the curriculum.

Q What is the difference between St Aidan's and community schools?

St Aidan's is like a community school in that:

- Haringey controls our pupil admissions – religion has no influence;
- Haringey is responsible for funding and all staff appointments;
- children are taught the same Religious Education syllabus and participate in similar assembly and collective worship programmes.

The differences are:

- Our school has a distinctly Christian ethos. Values are based on the Christian values of tolerance, forgiveness, love and patience. They are part of termly assembly themes;
- St Aidan's has a historical link with Holy Trinity and Holy Innocents Church and the main Christian festivals are celebrated there;
- the priests from Holy Trinity and Holy Innocents Churches take it in turns to lead an assembly once a week. In this way the school offers people an opportunity to understand faith from an Anglican perspective;
- there is a prayer corner in each classroom for those children who wish to use it.

Q We are not regular churchgoers / we believe in a different faith. Will our children still be admitted to St Aidan's?

Admissions are controlled by Haringey and St Aidan's follows the same admissions criteria as a community school, i.e. priority is given to SEN pupils, siblings and the distance from the school, in that order.

- Parents do not have to attend church for their children to be admitted to the school.
- Children do not need a recommendation from the church/ to attend the local church in order to be accepted at St Aidan's.
- St Aidan's is an inclusive school and welcomes children from a variety of faiths and non-faith backgrounds.

Q What is collective worship? Are my children being made to pray a lot?

At St Aidan's we believe that Collective Worship involves members of the school coming together and participating in prayer (which may be sung in the form of a hymn) or a moment of personal and spiritual reflection.

We understand Collective Worship to be a special act or occasion. The aims and purpose are:

- to provide an opportunity for children to worship God, or explore their own beliefs through reflection;
- to enable children to consider spiritual and moral issues;
- to encourage participation and response;
- to develop in children a sense of community spirit;
- to promote a common ethos with shared values and to reinforce positive attitudes;



- to teach children different ways of worshipping.

The school has a long-established programme of church visits and assemblies led by the priests in charge of Holy Trinity and Holy Innocents who take it in turns to visit once a week. The content of their presentations encourage children to think about moral issues and lessons for life, which are relevant to all children. These themes are then related to Christian teachings and the assembly concludes with an act of Collective Worship.

- The children do not pray before lunch or at the end of the day.
- Our pupils go to church four times a year – for Harvest Festival, Christmas, Easter and our year 6 leavers' assembly - as they always have done.

Q What happens if I don't want my child/my children to come to Church, to pray, to join in the collective worship?

Children who do not wish to participate are supported in their role of comfortable observers during the moment of Collective Worship

- Parents are welcome to raise their concerns in writing or in a meeting with the Headteacher.

Q What about those of us with other beliefs? Are other faiths mentioned and valued? Are other faith leaders invited in to school to lead assemblies? What about the views and values of non-believers?

The assembly programme is a multi-faith programme in which the school acknowledges and celebrates world faith festivals.

- Faith leaders and parents from a range of religious backgrounds are invited in to lead assemblies and support in RE lessons.
- Whilst the Acts of Worship in our school are Christian, we hold assemblies reflecting other religious traditions that are represented in the school and the wider community. We conduct our assemblies in a manner that is sensitive to the individual faiths and beliefs of all members of the school.

Q Are my children being taught to be Christians?

No. Children are taught Haringey's recently updated multi-faith Religious Education (RE) syllabus - 30 minutes per week in KS1 and 1 hour in KS2. This gives them an opportunity to learn about and understand all world faiths.

Q How can I find out more about assemblies and the religious education syllabus?

Copies of the Collective Worship and RE policies together with the RE syllabus are available from the school office on request.