



## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

<b>Meridian Angel Primary School</b>	St Mary with St John's 174 Dyson Road Upper Edmonton N18 2DS
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>London</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	
Local authority	N/A
Name of multi-academy trust	London Community Learning Trust
Date/s of inspection	11 October 2016
Date of last inspection	N/A
School's unique reference number	141017
Headteacher	Cheryll Milner
Inspector's name and number	NS144 John Viner

### School context

Meridian Angel Primary School is a small primary school located in Edmonton and serving the parish of St Mary with St John. It is a free school and opened in September 2014 in the hall of St John's Church but is shortly to transfer to a new building nearby. When the school moves into its new buildings it will take two classes each year instead of the present one. Its 190 pupils reflect the rich diversity of the area. There is high pupil mobility and much higher than average proportions of disadvantaged pupils, those with special needs and those who speak English as an additional language. Around a third of pupils attend church. The school has not yet been inspected by Ofsted.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Meridian Angel as a Church of England school are good

- Christian values lie at the heart of the school. They are visible in its work and define its character.
- The warm, respectful relationships between adults and learners make this a place where everyone feels welcomed and valued.
- Collective worship is a core aspect of school life contributing to a developing sense of shared spirituality, irrespective of faith or belief.
- The new headteacher articulates an ambitious Christian vision for the school that is shared by leaders and governors and is driving the school forward.
- The strong relationship with the parish church and parish priest ensures that the school serve the community in an expression of the faith that binds them.

### Areas to improve

- Make the school's Christian and Anglican identity clearer in public documentation, on the school's website and in its signage.
- Review the balance of the religious education (RE) curriculum so that the faiths that pupils encounter in the younger years are revisited when they are older.
- Improve the way that RE is taught by raising teachers' subject knowledge and developing their questioning skills to deepen pupils' thinking.

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

The school promotes a clear set of distinctive Christian values that define its work and purpose. They are shared by leaders and staff and recognised by parents. Pupils are steadily developing an appreciation that these values are lived out through the work of the school and are the reason that, 'teachers never give up on you'. Parents appreciate that Christian values underpin the policies and practices of the school and say that, 'it is right that policies are tested' in the way that bullying or bad behaviour is handled. Pupils say that, although some pupils do not behave well, adults deal with them quickly and sensitively. Because of the warm, harmonious relationships between and among adults and learners, this is a place where pupils know they are safe, valued and special. As a result, their attendance is rising rapidly and standards are improving steadily so that pupils make good progress, often from very low starting points. Their parents say that the school has become 'like a family'. Christian values also impact on the school's successful promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. While the majority of pupils demonstrate respect and tolerance for all faiths and beliefs, many are also beginning to explore deeper aspects of spirituality. Because of this they are growing in self-awareness and learning to express their thoughts with confidence. Parents say that this is a strength of the school and that their children are developing foundations for life. Because religious education (RE) is regarded as an important part of the curriculum, pupils are beginning to understand that Christianity is a world faith in the context of a diverse society. They enjoy the good opportunities which they have to learn about religions and faith communities. This makes a positive contribution to the school's Christian character and sets the school's values in a biblical context.

## **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Collective worship is a developing strength of the school. It is a valued part of every day and all who attend, parents, staff or pupils, say they are enriched and affirmed by it. The majority of pupils are enthusiastic about attending worship and most delight in the opportunities that they have to play an active part. This includes reading prayers, role play and helping with technical arrangements. Worship is uncompromisingly Christian, grounded in the person of Jesus and developing pupils' understanding that Christians regard God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Importantly, through constant reference to the school's values, pupils of all beliefs are beginning to appreciate that faith of any kind can be nurtured and contributes to their spiritual development. Through worship, pupils are beginning to understand the nature and purpose of prayer. There is a good focus on prayer, with some opportunities for pupils to contribute their own prayers for use at lunchtime and at the end of the day. Reflection areas in each classroom help pupils to reflect prayerfully and this helps them to understand that prayer is personal and private as well as collective and public. Some parents remark on how school worship impacts on their home life, for example the parent who now attends church because his daughter wants to pray, as she has learnt at school. Worship is carefully planned, with a range of themes drawn from the Church's year, major celebrations and the school's values. It is led by a range of leaders, including senior staff, teachers, visitors and the parish priest. This ensures that worship is fresh and interesting. Pupils especially enjoy the occasions when worship takes place in church. These afford a good experience of Anglican tradition and practice. Parents, regardless of faith and belief relish the opportunities to join in with collective worship and, when worship is in church, they attend in good numbers. Leaders and governors are developing good systems for the ongoing evaluation of worship so that it leads to planned improvement.

## **The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory**

For the majority of pupils, standards of attainment in RE are broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils make satisfactory and sometimes good progress, often from low beginnings. Pupils say that they enjoy RE because they like to learn about other religions and some say that they are often surprised about the new things they learn about their own faith. The quality of teaching and learning is variable: sometimes lessons are skilfully constructed around key learning points but there are times when teachers' subject knowledge is not secure enough so that their explanations lack precision and accuracy. Sometimes even Christian theology is presented inaccurately. This dilutes the impact of the lesson and pupils do not learn as well as they might. Some of the work that is set in RE is more like English and teachers' marking occasionally reflects this so that the lessons about and from religion are lost. An over-reliance on worksheets limits pupils' responses so that they become focused on completing a task and miss the key learning behind it. Teachers' questioning is not deep enough so that pupils' thinking is not sufficiently challenged or their understanding deepened. Through the newly introduced RE syllabus, pupils cover

Christianity in considerable depth and are introduced to a variety of other faiths. However, because coverage of other faiths is sometimes limited to the younger years, pupils do not always consolidate their knowledge when they are older. As a result, while pupils generally have a good grounding in Christianity, by the time they leave the school their knowledge of key faiths is not always as strong as it could be. Nevertheless, RE is strongly led by a relatively new committed, enthusiastic and determined leader who is respected by staff and whose priority has been planning, implement and resourcing the new syllabus. She has drawn support from other church schools and the diocese so that she can offer her colleagues both support and challenge. She has a clear understanding of the improvements required and the steps that must be taken to secure them.

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

The headteacher, key staff and governors share and articulate a clear and ambitious Christian vision for the school that is firmly rooted in the values which they promote. Every member of staff confirms that they are one with this vision and committed to its outworking. This is taking this newly established school on an exciting journey of faith and achievement that is reflected in the school's motto, 'Believe and Achieve'. Staff respect and trust the new headteacher who, with her deputy, is providing clear strategic leadership. They understand her vision and are universally supportive of her leadership. Leaders and governors know their school well; they are proud of all they have achieved since the school opened and of the way that the school fulfils its founding mission to serve the families of the parish, irrespective of faith and belief. However, because there was a delay in confirming that the school is an Anglican church school, there is a legacy of confusion about the school's Christian distinctiveness in its public documentation. This legacy is evident in the prospectus, the school's website and even the school sign which are unclear about the school's Christian and Anglican identity. Nevertheless, leadership and management are now good because leaders and governors are now very clear about the school's distinctiveness and how to proclaim it. They have developed good systems of self-evaluation that place the school's Christian character at the heart and robust plans are in hand to address the way that this is showcased. They ensure that the school's Christian values are the focus of all they do; have secured collective worship that is unquestionably Christian and Anglican; and have established a curriculum that gives appropriate importance to RE. They have appointed a committed subject leader who is successfully leading developments in her subject. Because this is a school that welcomes all faiths and none, pupils have a well-developed sense of diversity in the context of their local community. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very effectively, enhanced by visitors from other faith communities and events such as World Environment Day and international evenings. Governors understand the importance of safeguarding Christian leadership and work closely with the headteacher in supporting the wellbeing of the whole school community. Strong links with local church schools are providing leaders and teachers with opportunities to learn from each other, share effective practice and extend leadership skills. There is a strong relationship with the parish church that goes beyond the physical linking of the buildings so that, together, the church and school share a dynamic partnership that is mutually beneficial in uniting them in the Christian service of their community. In the words of the Bishop, they are 'bringing stability to an unstable community'. Through this work, pupils experience Christian love in action in which they engage with local and national charity events. Staff, leaders and governors eagerly and excitedly anticipate the imminent move into new school buildings. They understand the importance of sustaining there the Christian vision and character that the school has developed since it opened.

SIAMS report October 2016 Meridian Angel Primary, Edmonton N18 2DS