



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Michael's CE Primary School

88 Camden Street
Camden Town
London NW1 0JA

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Diocese: London

Local authority: London Borough of Camden

Dates of inspection: 7 May 2015

Date of last inspection: January 2010

School's unique reference number: 100044

Head Teacher: Lynn Trigg

Inspector's name and number: John Viner NS144

School context

St Michael's is a one-form entry primary school located in the London Borough of Camden and serving the Parish of St Pancras. It shares a site with a Catholic primary school with whom it shares a nursery. Its intake reflects the rich diversity of the area and the large majority of its 232 pupils speak English as an additional language. A slightly higher than average proportion of pupils have special educational needs. A handful of pupils attend church. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are around the national average and most pupils make good progress. The school was recently judged by Ofsted to require improvement.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Michael's as a Church of England school are good.

- The uniting impact of the school's Christian character builds a common bond of faith among people of all faiths.
- Collective worship lies at the heart of the school and affirms all who attend, whether they are Christian or not.
- Religious Education (RE) makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development so that they develop mature attitudes of tolerance and respect.
- Through the strong partnership with the parish church, the school is a meeting place of religion and education in the diverse community it serves.

Areas to improve

- Give pupils a voice in the evaluation of collective worship so that their views contribute to its strategic development.
- Develop more opportunities for pupils to reflect and respond in personal prayer.
- Further strengthen pupils' experience of RE by including opportunities to visit local non-Christian places of worship.

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

In living out Jesus' injunction to 'bring life in all its fullness', St Michael's places Christian values at the heart of all it does. This is recognised by its pupils, celebrated by its staff and valued by its parents. Parents of all faiths understand these Christian foundations and say that, regardless of faith, they give their children values for life and so prepare them for society. This clear and explicit focus on Christianity in a multi-faith context has an impressive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development so that they develop mature, thoughtful attitudes of respect and understanding of all faiths and cultures. Pupils develop positive attitudes to school. They attend regularly, behave well and work hard. However, a recent and short-term decline in the attainment of some of the least advantaged pupils has required the school to move rapidly to reverse it. This is bringing about necessary and sustained improvement. Relationships between and among adults and learners are rooted in the Christian values that the school promotes so that this is a harmonious, happy school where pupils flourish. Pupils regard Religious Education (RE) as an important aspect of their learning. They say they are excited by it and recognise that it plays a key role in promoting their understanding of and respect for others. It makes an important contribution to the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is a strength of the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Daily collective worship is a central part of school life and the majority of pupils understand its importance and value the experience. They come to worship willingly, behave reverently and are generally attentive. Pupils of all faiths say that they like the quiet atmosphere and enjoy the opportunities to join in through acting and singing. They participate enthusiastically and sing tunefully. Worship is carefully planned around the core of the Church's year. It is Biblical, focused on the person of Jesus and supported by high quality presentations. A cross and candles provide a clear visual signal that this is a special time and, together with responses and prayers, ensure that pupils experience and appreciate Anglican tradition. Pupils of other faiths develop good knowledge of what Christians believe and understand the centrality of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit to Christian worship. Parents of other faiths say that experiencing the structure of Anglican worship helps their children to better appreciate their own worship. There is regular and committed involvement by members of the parish church team who lead worship weekly and contribute to RE lessons, Pupils have opportunities to lead prayers and readings and so develop an awareness of the nature and purpose of prayer. Prayers also take place at key points in the school day but the promotion of personal prayer and reflection is currently limited. Parents of all faiths like the opportunities they have to observe acts of worship in school and keenly attend the celebrations of key Christian festivals in the parish church. The quality of worship is regularly monitored by school leaders but there is not enough opportunity for pupils to be involved in its evaluation. Consequently their voice is not heard and they do not contribute to the further development of worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Religious Education is outstanding because of the high standards of attainment and rapid progress that pupils make, often from a low starting point. This is evident in the quality of their discussion and depth of understanding. All pupils develop a solid understanding of Christianity and many know the Bible well. Especially striking is the way in which they can compare Christianity with their own and other faiths and develop the ability to see issues from each other's points of view. Pupils' knowledge of Christianity is excellent and is well-balanced by their detailed knowledge of Islam and Judaism as well as good understanding of a range of other faiths. This deep learning helps them to develop high level skills of enquiry and analysis and the work the school has done in helping pupils to frame their questions results in mature and insightful discussion. The curriculum is drawn from the diocesan scheme and is well taught by knowledgeable teachers. Pupils universally agree that teachers make RE fun and are keenly

enthusiastic to learn about their own and other faiths. Parish staff add capacity to RE and effective use is made of the parish church as a teaching resource. Pupils place high value on RE and say that they would like further to enrich their learning by visiting other places of worship. RE makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Parents speak very highly of the way that it helps their children to develop as well-rounded individuals who understand the importance of faith and belief in a diverse world. Rigorous and effective monitoring by a skilled coordinator results in closely focused and highly effective action planning. She is well supported by school leaders and diocesan officers in her ambitions for the subject and provides high levels of support and guidance for teachers to ensure that there is a continued focus on ongoing improvement.

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

Leaders and governors are united in bringing about the necessary improvements required by Ofsted. In this they demonstrate many outstanding characteristics. The dynamic Christian vision of the headteacher is shared and articulated by key staff and governors. The common commitment of leaders and governors to living out the Christian values that they promote impacts on the whole school community through its policies and practices. As a result, school improvement is rapid and sustained. Through effective and accurate self-evaluation, leaders and governors have a very clear understanding of the school's Christian distinctiveness and how it underpins its work. They ensure that RE and collective worship are given high priority in the school and that staff are well-prepared for their roles in leading and teaching. Governors have a good understanding of the future leadership needs of the school and so successfully plan to meet them. Stakeholders recognise that the school occupies a particular meeting place of faith and education, which is valued by the diverse community in which it is located. Parents say that this is what makes the school special. Regardless of faith, they feel involved with the school, respect the Head Teacher and trust her judgements. The strong and very effective partnership with the parish church enriches the school's Christian identity and is of clear benefit to pupils and their families through the positive links with other communities of faith. Parents say that this is a place where faith matters and contributes to the personal and spiritual development of their children.

SIAMS report May 2015 St Michael's CE Primary School, Camden NW1 0JA