

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Mary's Church of England Primary School	
26 Tentelow Lane, Norwood Green, Southall UB2 4LE	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	London
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	N/A
Local authority	London Borough of Ealing
Date of inspection	28 September 2017
Date of last inspection	N/A
Type of school and unique reference number	Free school with academy status 140963
Headteacher	Jane Mutch
Inspector's name and number	Gladys Vendy NS 299

School context

The parishioners of St Mary's Church, Norwood Green, founded the school to address the shortage of Church of England places in the area. The school opened in September 2014 with one full-time class of Reception Year children in the church hall. It has increased by one class each year. It re-located to its permanent site in September 2017. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language is above the national average. The number of pupils who are entitled to free school meals or who have special educational needs or disabilities is in line with the national average. The parish has been in an interregnum for over a year. The school was recently judged by Ofsted to be good.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Mary's as a Church of England school is good

- The strong leadership of the headteacher and trustees (governors) have successfully established the Christian ethos of the school so that all pupils and their families feel valued, nurtured and included as members of the school community.
- Strong links with St Mary's church supports pupils' spiritual development enabling them to foster an understanding of the meaning to 'grow in God's grace' through prayer and the liturgy.
- The openness and warmth of the school as a Church school for people of all faiths has generated a real sense of community through its practice of the Christian values of trust, respect and love for each other.

Areas to improve

- Revisit the school's Christian values so that all members of the school community can clearly articulate them and relate them to biblical teaching.
- Plan worship in more detail with clear links between biblical teaching, biblical references and Christian values to enable themes to be further developed and to equip members of staff in leading class based worship.
- Embed assessment strategies in Religious Education (RE) so that information feeds into the planning of lessons to more accurately meet the pupils' needs.

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

The school is situated in an area of diverse faith groups, cultures, and socio-economic groups. Its distinctive Christian character, which has been energetically created from the outset, has drawn in those of all faiths who are

seeking a school founded on spiritual values. The school's core Christian values of compassion, justice, reverence and thankfulness permeate all aspects of school life and make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils understand the importance of Christian values, such as kindness, trust and respect, but sometimes find it difficult to explain in detail how they relate to biblical teaching. Pupils enter the Reception class with standards below those which are typically expected. Although pupils' make good progress, by the end of Key Stage 1 a number of pupils are still slightly below the national average. This is because both pupil mobility and the numbers of those speaking English as an additional language are high. The recent appointment of a special needs teacher is addressing this situation through the use of skilled and structured support. Pastoral care, based on the Christian values of love and compassion, is raising levels of attendance and punctuality. Parents speak about the holistic approach to pupils who are treated as individuals. One parent said 'children are invested into as people'. The warmth modelled by adults in the school impacts positively upon the personal development, achievement and well-being of the pupils and their families. Pupils have a clear moral understanding of right and wrong and as a result their behaviour is very good. Relationships between all groups of the school community are very strong and developed through the Christian ethos so that everyone feels included. The stimulating curriculum has a strong environmental focus which contributes effectively to the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Pupils reflect and celebrate their diverse communities and as a result have a very good understanding of Christianity as a world-wide faith. Religious Education makes an important contribution to the Christian character of the school and to pupils' developing spirituality. Parents say that their children are encouraged to talk about their beliefs in an open and inclusive environment.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

During its growth the school has faced the challenges of temporary accommodation with restricted space in addition to the absence of a parish priest for over a year. It has resolutely held fast to the provision of distinctively Christian worship each day. This has been enhanced through the weekly visit to church by a class, for worship led by the lay minister. Here, pupils develop a good understanding of Anglicanism through rituals and responses and the pattern of the liturgical year. For example, pupils often carry the candles for the Gospel reading from the lectionary and learn about exchanging the peace. Pupils speak enthusiastically about going to church and some have since begun to attend worship on a Sunday with their families including the annual 'Education Sunday' at the start of the school year which was very well attended.

Worship is planned and led by the headteacher alone because as yet there are no senior leaders nor is there a parish priest. Clear links between biblical teaching, biblical references and Christian values are not evident in the planning. The theme for the half term is underdeveloped because of this lack of detail in the planning. This also affects classroom based worship for those classes not attending church because teachers are not fully confident in leading worship. Although pupils enjoy participating in worship by responding to stories and questions, they are not yet included in its planning and evaluation.

Pupils have a growing understanding of the Trinity through using prayers such as the grace and know that Jesus Christ is God's son. For example, one child said, 'Jesus came to look after God's people'. Prayer is highly valued by all pupils, regardless of their faith, and forms a framework to the day. They know that prayer is about thanking, forgiving, asking and praying for others. Opportunities for pupils to deepen their spirituality are well used so that pupils understand what it means 'to grow in God's grace'. For example, there are prayer boxes in each classroom into which pupils can put their own prayer requests which are later shared in collective worship. Prayer tables in classrooms provide areas which pupils of all faiths use for quiet reflection. Adults of all faiths in the school community feel they can ask for prayers for their families. Worship is monitored by the trustees and reported on regularly at their meetings. However, it needs to be more rigorous and incorporate the views of pupils so that evaluations feed directly into the planning.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

RE is given a high priority and is treated as a core subject. In the short time the school has been in its new building, attractive displays of RE work are beginning to point to the centrality of the subject. At present it is the only subject in the school which has a named leader. Her passion and enthusiasm for RE, together with her sensitive support to colleagues, means that this area is developing very well. The school does not currently use its own diocesan scheme of work. It has rightly identified the need to review the syllabus so that a more creative approach enables pupils to develop their skills of inquiry and reflection. Teaching is supported by outlined lesson plans which teachers then adapt and annotate to give more detail. These help pupils to relate their learning to their own lives. Pupils show very good prior knowledge of Bible stories and a growing understanding of the Christian faith. RE plays an important part in underpinning the school's Christian values and contributing to the

pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Standards of attainment in RE are good and in line with other core subjects. Assessment strategies in RE have been introduced but they are not yet used effectively to inform planning. As a result activities do not always match the pupils' needs as sharply as they could. The learning walk confirmed the school's judgement that the majority of RE teaching is judged to be good. Pupils are engaged during lessons and enjoy the subject. Visits to other places of worship are in the early stages of development. The school has good links with the nearby Sikh school and one class visited them to experience worship at an important Sikh festival. The trustees meet regularly with the subject leader to monitor and evaluate RE. This has led to support for her professional development in RE through attendance at the diocesan training programme.

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

The strong leadership of the headteacher and trustees have been instrumental in promoting a school which is founded on Christian principles. Their determination helped them to overcome many setbacks before the school was able to move into its permanent accommodation. The delay has meant that some aspects of the school's Christian character, although present, are not yet fully embedded. Parents, trustees and staff all say that the establishment of the school was a 'leap of faith'. The vision of the school 'growing in God's grace' is understood by everyone in the community. As one child said 'it means that we live in harmony and are really kind and forgiving to each other, just as Jesus wants us to be'. The calm and happy atmosphere this engenders makes a significant impact upon the personal development, achievement and well-being of the pupils. The admissions policy welcomes members of all faiths and none. Parents of different faiths say that an expression of faith is integrated into the life of the school, inclusiveness is celebrated and everyone is welcomed. Regular visits by the trustees enable them to monitor and review the Christian distinctiveness of the school and to feed this into strategic planning. They also ensure that collective worship and RE meet statutory requirements. As a result strengths are accurately identified and there is a consistent focus on nurturing families and raising standards. Trustees recognise the importance of equipping teachers for the future leadership of this church school through specific professional development. Expectations about what it means to work in a church school are made clear to candidates at interviews so that a common purpose is shared. This means that staff morale is high and drives forward the vision of the school. A fledgling school council has begun to contribute ideas about the outdoor environment so that pupils feel they have a voice in the development of the school. Although there is no formal organisation for parents, they feel the school is open and supportive and their views are heard. Strong partnerships between church and school are reflected in their websites and make a real contribution to the effectiveness of the school as a church school. The school has very good relationships with their neighbouring church schools which have supported them in their journey as a growing and developing school.

SIAMS report September 2017 St Mary' CE School, Norwood Green UB2 4LE