

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Andrew and St Francis Church of England Primary School

Belton Road, Brent, London NW2 5PE

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	London
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Not previously inspected
Date of academy conversion	July 2015
Name of multi-academy trust	LDBS Academies Trust
Date of inspection	7 June 2018
Date of last inspection	Not previously inspected
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary Academy 141672
Headteacher	Troy Sharpe
Inspector's name and number	John Viner NS144

School context

St Andrew and St Francis is a larger than average primary school and nursery, serving the parish of St Andrew and St Francis, Willesden Green. Its 436 pupils reflect the diverse area and around three quarters of pupils speak English as an additional language. A lower than average proportion have special educational needs although a higher than average proportion have Education, Health and Care Plans. The school receives additional funding for a much higher than average proportion of disadvantaged pupils, A third of pupils attend church. Pupils make good progress and achieve standards that are around the national average. The school was recently judged by Ofsted to be good.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Andrew and St Francis as a Church of England school are good

- The headteacher, leaders and governors, share and articulate an ambitious Christian vision for the school that is driving rapid improvement in pupils' personal development and academic achievement.
- Christian values provide a foundation for the school's development, unite stakeholders in a shared mission and are evident in all aspects of its work.
- Collective worship lies at the heart of the school so that pupils of all faiths and none are affirmed and motivated by it.
- Although leaders have not until recently recognised the importance of religious education (RE) to the school's Christian character, the introduction of a new programme of study is beginning to add depth and rigour to pupils' experience and is addressing the weaknesses of the past.
- The strong partnership with the parish church has sustained the school through turbulent times and contributes to its present success.
- Parents feel welcomed and regard the school a Christian hub in their community.

Areas to improve

- Improve the provision of Religious Education by:
 - Rapidly embedding the new syllabus so that it provides the basis for a progressive and developmental programme of study.
 - Improving assessment so that teachers can better plan to meet pupils emerging needs.
 - Raising teachers' subject knowledge in order to meet the higher expectations of the new syllabus and pitch lessons at levels that are appropriate to pupils' understanding.

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

Distinctively Christian values lie at the heart of the school and are evident in every aspect of its work. They define the school and confirm its Christian identity. Leaders and governors have carefully considered which particular values should be prioritised as key to the school's Christian distinctiveness and ensured that these are central to its ongoing development. There is a direct impact of these values on the warm, productive relationships between and among adults and pupils and on pupils' personal and academic development. As a result, attendance is improving and both standards and progress are rising rapidly. Because these Christian values are deeply embedded in the life of the school, pupils recognise their fundamental importance; they know them and can explain their significance. Pupils acknowledge that it is the school's Christian character that makes this a safe, happy and harmonious learning community. Because of this, they behave well, look out for one another and take pride in their school. Parents agree and say that, since the school has become an academy, its declared Christian values have made it a place of welcome and warmth. They say that it has become a hub of Christian love where they can meet together, make new friends and build community.

A shared sense of spirituality is woven through the school so that pupils think deeply about spiritual matters, make connections between faith and action and are able to express their views with increasing maturity and confidence. As a result, they understand the relevance and importance of faith in their personal development. Parents also recognise this and say that the school is giving their children a firm foundation for the future. Pupils develop positive attitudes and show compassion in their dealings with others. Because of this, they develop a strong sense of community, recognising and celebrating diversity. Pupils are proud to be part of a diverse and multicultural school where, they say it does not matter what your belief, all are valued equally. As a result, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very effectively. Pupils develop a real interest in faith and belief. They universally enjoy collective worship and are excited by RE. They are well aware that Christianity is a world faith in the context of a diverse society and that RE is a valued aspect of school's Christian character.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship lies at the heart of the school and all members of the school community, both adults and pupils, know that it is important and that worship is an affirming experience, regardless of faith or belief. Worship takes place each day, with separate arrangements for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. There is a weekly mass, led by the parish priest, for pupils of Key Stage 2 and their families. All pupils, whatever their age or faith, say that they look forward to worship and enjoy taking part. They behave impeccably, sit reverently and sing enthusiastically. Many older pupils say that attending worship is transformational because it makes them think deeply about what they believe. For example, one pupil explained how hearing about Jesus healing a man with leprosy changed his thinking. Pupils say that worship is an opportunity to think about God and talk to him in prayer, regardless of their faith or belief. Pupils of other faiths say that, through attending worship, they strengthen their own faith, for example one who suggested that regularly attending worship helped him to become a better Muslim.

Worship is always Christian, biblical, and centred on the person of Jesus. From early on in their school experience, pupils encounter the Christian belief that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit and even young pupils can explain what this means in terms that are simple and relevant to them. Parents speak warmly of the enjoyment their children get from worship. They say how they themselves enjoy the times when they can attend acts of worship, either at the weekly mass or on the occasions when worship takes place in the parish churches. The mass is a focus for the week and is an excellent experience of Anglican tradition and practice. While many Christian children attend confirmation classes in the school and go on to be communicants, others of all faiths enjoy the regularity of mass and its liturgy.

From the time they join the school, pupils learn about the nature and purpose of prayer and, as they move through the school, they grow in confidence in personal reflection, and in private and public prayer. The school environment, with its many displays of scripture, prayer and symbols is a reminder that all life is spent in prayer. Worship is carefully planned by the headteacher, leaders and incumbent around a series of themes, rooted in the school's Christian values and in the Church's calendar. By distributing the leadership to include clergy, leaders, teachers and classes, worship is kept fresh and interesting and pupils say they enjoy the variety. Monitoring of worship is carefully planned in advance – it is regular and evaluative. It includes listening to pupils, reflections of staff and reviews by governors and it leads to ongoing, planned improvement.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

The school's provision of RE requires improvement because, although very recent changes are an improvement, there is a legacy of under-achievement and many pupils have not received the quality of RE to which they were

entitled. Although improving rapidly, achievement in religious education is lower than nationally expected and, until recently, pupils have not begun to make the progress they should. This is because, although RE is treated as a core subject and has a high profile in the school, the use of an outdated programme of study resulted in it being taught through a series of disconnected activities. It did not therefore build pupils' knowledge and understanding in a progressive manner. The balance of faiths taught did not meet the expectations of the Church of England's statement of entitlement and this limited pupils' broad knowledge of religion and belief. The school has only recently taken positive steps to reverse this situation: a new syllabus has just been introduced that is measured, developmental and more challenging. However, its very recent introduction means that the success of its implementation is yet too early to measure.

While pupils say that RE is exciting because their teachers make it fun, teachers have not always ensured that lessons are structured around the development of the skills of enquiry, reflection and analysis. They sometimes set work that is not closely enough matched to pupils' maturity and the development of their thinking skills. This can limit its impact when questions are too challenging for pupils' deep understanding. Similarly, although the school's Christian distinctiveness successfully promotes pupils' spirituality, this is often not recognised in RE and many are denied opportunities for the depth of thinking of which they are capable. The introduction of learning through projects which include some aspects of RE, is now providing opportunities for extending pupils' thinking. In addition, a play-based approach to RE is improving the relevance and accessibility of some lessons, although teachers are not yet fully confident in the method. There is an assessment system in place, which provides teachers with a measure of their pupils' development but it has been used inconsistently because of the weaknesses in the curriculum. By the time they leave the school, pupils have a sound knowledge of the main teachings, beliefs and practices of Christianity. However, so far, their deeper understanding of the nature of faith and belief and their knowledge of the key facts of other world faiths has not been sufficiently secure. Parents recognise this, but say that recent changes are gradually improving their children's knowledge of religion and belief.

RE is led by two skilled, experienced and knowledgeable senior leaders. They are well aware of what must be done to bring about improvement and, with high quality support and advice from diocesan officers, are implementing rapid change. They are ensuring that the curriculum and its assessment meet the needs of the pupils and that teachers will have the skills and knowledge they need to meet the greater demands of RE going forward.

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

Although not immediately clear in the school's motto, the headteacher, clergy, leaders and governors are united behind an ambitious Christian vision for the school rooted in the belief that 'we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us'. Implementing this vision is driving improvement and has already brought about rapid change. Its impact is evident in pupils' improved behaviour, their better attendance and in rapidly rising standards of academic achievement. Parents say that there is a new determination about the school, that their children are really happy and that 'things are getting better and better'.

Leaders and governors benefit from the high quality support of diocesan academy advisers and this partnership has led the transformation of the school through prioritising the most urgent actions necessary to bring about rapid improvement. However, while they have secured outstanding collective worship, they have until now, failed to recognise the importance of religious education to the school's Christian character. Their otherwise insightful and dynamic self-evaluation has not accurately reflected the weaknesses in RE, although they have safeguarded its effective leadership in times of staff change. These leaders are focused on quickly securing the improvements they know are needed. The distinctive Christian vision that motivates leaders and governors is focused on meeting the needs of all pupils in the context of the promotion of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils recognise that they are valued and that leaders care about their progress.

Governors know the school well. They visit frequently, are involved in school life and have a keen awareness of its future leadership needs, with robust plans to address them. Two senior staff have already moved into leadership of other church schools and there is a commitment to equip middle and senior leaders for increased responsibility and so maintain a sense of energetic leadership, driving rapid change. Parents have great faith in the school leaders. They appreciate their accessibility and they trust their judgements. The longstanding, warm and mutually beneficial relationship with the parish church has sustained the school through its most turbulent times. The regular involvement of the parish priest in the life of the school, and the spiritual support he brings, unites church and school in the Christian service of their community.