

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Holy Trinity and St Silas Church of England Primary School

Hartland Road, Haverstock Hill, London NW1 8DE

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Diocese

London

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Local authority

Camden

Date of inspection

3 July 2018

Date of last inspection

April 2013

Type of school and unique reference number

Voluntary Aided 100033

Headteacher

Lorraine Dolan

Inspector's name and number

John Pearson-Hicks NS760

School context

Holy Trinity and St Silas CE School is a small one form entry primary school. The school is situated in an area of high social and economic deprivation. Pupils who attend this school come from varied socio-economic backgrounds. The new admissions criteria which was being put in place at the point of the last inspection has ensured the school is inclusive in serving the local community. The numbers of pupils speaking English as an additional language and those with special educational needs/or disabilities is above the national average, where as those who are eligible for free school meals is now below the national average. A new headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Holy Trinity & St Silas as a Church of England school are outstanding

- An explicit set of Christian values are the bedrock of this school and are evident in all aspects of its work.
- Collective worship is central to the life of the school and is highly inspirational and inclusive, enabling all members of the school community to understand the purpose and impact of prayer.
- Pupils greatly enjoy religious education (RE), achieve high standards and are supported by a creative and well delivered curriculum with consistently outstanding teaching.
- The partnership between the school and parish church is highly effective.
- The headteacher, staff and governors are united in their aspirations for all pupils and families and this is rooted in the school's Christian vision.

Areas to improve

- Establish clear central points of focus in worship to maximise the impact of visual resources to support worship.

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

The distinctive Christian character of the school is clearly lived out through its explicit Christian values; *kononia*, wisdom, endurance, forgiveness, compassion and service and its mission statement, 'Strong in the Faith'. The whole community clearly understands how its Christian values impact on their daily lives and their aspirations for the future. The focused and creative work on explicit Christian values means all pupils have a very good grasp on their meaning and practical application. The clarity and passion of senior leaders and governors in communicating the purpose and application of Christian values effectively impacts on the personal, social, moral and spiritual

development of pupils. A group of year 6 pupils explained that the school's 'Christian values had developed really well since being in Reception' because they now use them every day. Christian values, alongside global goals and the 'three c's' (courage, caring, co-operation) are clearly visible in all aspects of the school's work. As a result pupils are highly articulate in explaining the purpose and impact that Christian values have on them as individuals and as a 'united community'. Since the last inspection, RE provision has gone from strength to strength through highly effective teaching and a creative approach to the syllabus which 'brings the subject to life'. This has led to pupils deepening their understanding of Christianity, other world faiths, and how people hold different views about those of faith or no faith. The impact is that the pupils are deeply caring of one another and apply Christian values to their relationships and their work. Many pupils enter the school with skill levels below that of their national expected age. The rate of progress has continued to improve over recent years and all pupils make at least good progress, regardless of their starting points. By the end of Key Stage 2 levels of attainment are above the national average. Pupils are unanimous in their enthusiasm about learning because 'we like how everything links together' and that drama 'builds our confidence'. The impact of clear systems and structures means the pupils, including the most vulnerable, feel valued and cared for. The impact of the school's Christian values alongside implementing a new RE syllabus has ensured that the pupils are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the school's Christian identity. Pupils give many examples of why school and church is important. For example, 'we show endurance and compassion for others in reaching our full potential'. Consequently pupils enjoy coming to school, are well behaved and families are well supported. The attendance of pupils is consistently high and staff are effective in supporting them and families so that they are in school regularly. The atmosphere created in this school is one of a calm oasis in a busy city, alongside a passionate commitment of staff and governors to meeting the needs of all learners. This compliments the aspirations of pupils and staff. The pupils articulate the positive impact that staff and the incumbent have on the school in deepening their understanding of God and Jesus. It is evident that the whole community see the relationship between school and church as mutually supportive. The school ensures pupils are well supported in carefully planned and targeted ways which impacts on each child's self-worth. Parents describe how the headteacher and staff 'greet us and our children by name' each day, which ensures problems or concerns are dealt with thoughtfully and swiftly. Parents and governors explain clearly the positive impact the school's distinctive Christian character, worship and teaching of RE has on the lives of pupils. They explain that 'it is an inclusive school which is compelling' because 'it values all our religions'. Leaders are focussed on ensuring all pupils get the most out of their time in Holy Trinity and St Silas. This school is working in creative ways to ensure they are 'constantly reviewing and improving' for the good of all the pupils.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship, in all its forms, is central to the school day where Christian values, Bible stories and themes relating to the Christian year are joined together so that everyone 'can think about God'. Pupils are clear that this 'adds to our character without us even noticing'. As a result, collective worship makes a significant contribution to the understanding pupils have of their place in the world, the positive impact they can have and their personal sense of spirituality. Pupils articulate a clear enthusiasm for collective worship because all those involved in leading worship make it meaningful. Senior leaders and the incumbent work closely together to ensure worship reflects Christian values, themes being explored in other areas of the curriculum and current events. As a result pupils are aware of global issues and make effective links between the Christian faith and the liturgical year, alongside issues facing the local area and beyond. Pupils confidently explain how worship impacts on their relationships and understanding of each other so that we 'come closer to God'. Clear systems in planning and evaluation, alongside the effective involvement of pupils in worship, has developed their understanding of how the school's values relate to the teachings of Jesus, the Bible and prayer. Pupils are regularly involved in the planning and leading of worship and celebration which enhances their enjoyment. A clearer use of a visual focal point would improve worship further. Pupils, staff and governors are involved in evaluating worship which is used by leaders to ensure continuous improvement over time. As a result, pupils have a sense that they are 'very involved' in leading worship and that it is 'shared' with them. The incumbent, staff and pupils see collective worship, Mass in church and prayer, as an important part of school life which is communicated effectively to parents and carers. As a result the whole community feel 'included' in acts of worship. There are many opportunities for pupils to pray, write their own prayers and to share prayers with others. Pupils have an age appropriate understanding of the links between God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit which has been enhanced by the effective teamwork of the headteacher and incumbent. Pupils clearly appreciate the involvement of the incumbent and explain how worship, especially on Monday, 'helps us calm down and get ready for the week ahead'. Relationships between school and church play a significant part in deepening the pupil's understanding of the Bible and how parents view the positive impact of worship on everyone. Pupils talk openly about how prayer and worship impacts on them as individuals, in developing their faith, and in respecting and the views of others.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE has a very high profile in the life of this school. The pupils' in-depth knowledge and understanding of Christianity is a strength. Pupils are animated when they talk about RE and their learning. This is clearly evident in the outstanding quality, quantity and breadth of work in RE books. Since the last inspection a new syllabus and assessment system has been put in place. There has been a significant focus on assessment in recent years which has resulted in the continued improvement of RE and why the pupils articulate their love of the subject so clearly. Staff are creative in their delivery of RE lessons. As a result, pupils understand the purpose of RE as it helps them understand their place in the world and the impact their actions can have on others. The school systematically plots the progress of pupils and ensures marking is of a consistently high standard throughout the school. The impact of regular feedback to pupils enables 'deeper thinking' about why and what they learn. This, combined with a well balanced curriculum, has ensured pupils gain a wider understanding of the major world religions in meaningful ways. Pupils are highly motivated by RE lessons which include dramatic re-enactments to bring the Bible alive. This ensures learning is fun and memorable and helps pupils build their confidence to share their knowledge and understanding with others. This contributes to the overall success and enjoyment of RE. Since the last inspection the academic standards have remained high and RE makes a significant contribution to these achievements. The quality of written work and other forms of recording in RE learning is of a consistently high standard. A systematic approach to teaching and learning in RE has ensured excellence throughout the school. Consequently there is a common understanding of expectations in teaching and learning which supports all pupils to make very best progress irrespective of their starting point. One reason the pupils give for why they enjoy RE so much is that 'we learn something new in every lesson'. For example, one class had recently been on a residential pilgrimage to Walsingham. Pupils enjoyed this because it gave them an opportunity to 'learn more about Jesus and Mary' and to 'help their faith grow'. The impact of consistently outstanding teaching and learning is that the whole school community place great value on RE. Pupils are enabled to be creative in applying their knowledge and understanding in other contexts. Parents know RE is a strength because 'children are encouraged to grow in confidence' and 'an increased focus on world religions is compelling'. Since the last inspection RE leaders have worked systematically to develop teaching and learning through moderating, evaluating and in supporting staff in the delivery of RE. The new syllabus, together with a focus on developing the skills of teachers alongside regular assessment, has led to a highly effective and creative RE curriculum. As a result, the staff are confident and enthusiastic about teaching RE and feel well supported by leaders. It is clear that achievement in RE features regularly in governors' meetings and that there is a clear system for review and development. Consequently, governors are very knowledgeable about the curriculum and the high standards achieved in RE, which in turn informs accurate self-evaluation.

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

The headteacher, alongside other school leaders and governors, communicate a quietly determined sense of drive and aspiration based on the school's Christian values and school vision, 'Strong in the Faith'. This vision is rooted in a Christian understanding of inclusiveness and unity which sits alongside explicit Christians values. Since the last inspection the school has worked systematically to ensure the school's values are embedded and have a significant impact on the life of the school. The whole community, effectively led by the senior leadership team and the incumbent, are committed to a practical living out of the school's Christian values. The school has effectively utilised its partnership with local authority and diocesan advisors to ensure development has continued since the last inspection. Pupils are exceptionally enthusiastic and talk confidently about 'their' school values and the impact it has on them and the whole community. Parents and pupils talk of the excellent support they receive from the staff in making learning both challenging and exciting. This, combined with the clarity of the school's Christian values, has a significant impact on the personal, spiritual and academic development of pupils which is central to the ethos of the school. Pupils relate their own experience of Jesus and God through the school's values, collective worship and the creative approach to the curriculum as a whole. Many examples are given, from the youngest to the oldest of pupils, of how they apply their learning to their lives. Consequently, all pupils enjoy, achieve and aspire to 'reach their full potential' because they know they are in a safe, calm and caring Christian environment. Leaders ensure a rich and diverse curriculum celebrates the backgrounds of all, makes learning highly engaging and encourages confidence. The centrality of RE and collective worship in the school ensures it meets statutory requirements. Embedded systems for reviewing and evaluating the work and impact of school leaders has ensured continuous development as a distinctively Christian school. Excellent communication throughout this school community means all staff know what the expectations are of working in this church school. All leaders, including the governing body, are actively involved in the school's regular self-evaluation and they accurately evaluate their work. This reinforces and celebrates what has been achieved, as well as identifying future points for development. The school has thought carefully about succession planning and the needs and development of all staff. Consequently they deploy staff effectively. Pupils, alongside staff, governors and parents, are clear that this school has a distinctively Christian foundation and relate this clearly to faith, the Bible and the school's Christian values.