

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Emmanuel Church of England Primary School

158 Mill Lane, London NW6 1TF

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	London
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Camden
Date/s of inspection	27 April 2018
Date of last inspection	13 June 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	100030 Voluntary Aided
Headteacher	Kathryn Fitzsimmons
Inspector's name and number	Jan Matthews 855

School context

This recently expanded, split site, voluntary aided primary school is situated in West Hampstead in the London Borough of Camden. The school caters for 266 pupils with a nursery and a bulge class in Year 5. Since the last inspection, the school moved into a brand new building and the first Nursery class started in September 2013. After a complete change of leadership, the school came out of a soft federation in September 2013 when the current headteacher took up the position. At 18%, the number of disadvantaged children for whom the school receives additional funding is slightly lower than the average and, at 3.6%, the number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly higher.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Emmanuel CE Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The overwhelming ethos is one of warmth, welcome and inclusion because excellent pastoral care and inclusion practices ensure that every child is valued as a unique and special child of God.
- The inspirational school leaders lead by example and live out their Christian vision for the school.
- The enthusiastic and aspirational leadership of Religious Education (RE) has resulted in confident staff, high quality teaching and a continually evolving and relevant curriculum for the pupils.
- The school's values are firmly based in the Bible and are evident in the relationships throughout the school.
- Pupils speak confidently, easily using the language of respect and Christian values about their own diverse community.
- Because of the commitment of school leaders to a continuous cycle of self- evaluation and improvement, the school, as a Church school, is always improving and evolving.

Areas to improve

- In order that pupils better understand themselves as spiritual beings, leaders must ensure that pupils have the appropriate language needed to discuss ideas and formulate opinions.

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

The overwhelming ethos at Emmanuel School is one of warmth, welcome and inclusivity. Parents talk appreciatively about how all pupils, regardless of religion, ability or race are known and valued by all staff, including the senior leaders. This feeling of being known and accepted means that learners feel secure and safe. Relationships between pupils, between adults and between pupils and adults are excellent and this leads to a harmonious and positive learning environment where pupils can thrive, learn and know that they are valued. As a result, they feel safe, they want to come to school and attendance levels are excellent.

The image of an A.S.P.I.R.E tree provides pupils with an easy way of understanding how positive learning attitudes branch out from a firm foundation (trunk) of Christian values. Pupils speak eloquently about how the learning and Christian values will help them to succeed in school and become the best people that they can possibly be. Academic standards are good and progress from starting points is excellent. This is because each child is treated as a unique child of God and their individual needs are catered for. Pupils have very high aspirations and are confident that, with the right attitudes, they will achieve them. One parent spoke about how the school's Christian values are so embedded that they are obvious in how her secondary aged child approaches life and deals with problems.

Opportunities for spiritual development abound. For example, Reception children went around the school looking for God. They found him in flowers, creepy crawlies, each other and many other places. Throughout the school, there are opportunities for quiet reflection and spiritual development throughout the day. As a result, pupils are happy, well balanced and appreciative of what they have. A wide range of trips and cultural activities allow pupils to appreciate a world beyond their own experience.

An understanding of how diverse communities can work together is greatly enhanced by close links between Emmanuel and a Christian school in Sierra Leone. Closer to home, pupils have an acute awareness that the community in which they live is both culturally and religiously diverse. They give examples of how their RE lessons provide them with both the knowledge and language of religion they will need to understand and live harmoniously in the London of the future. Empathy and acceptance of others is a real strength of the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worshipping together is central to the school's work in strengthening the community. Pupils and staff of all faiths happily join together, learn together and share times of reflection and prayer. Every day ends with a time of worship and pupils describe it as a time to: be quiet and think about the day you have just had, to appreciate friends, teachers and each other and think about how to make tomorrow better. All participants enter and leave respectfully and listen carefully. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility for some aspects of worship from reading their own prayers to managing the computer. Worship is often used to place the school's values into their biblical context, for example, pupils talk about Bible stories in which Jesus showed empathy for the people around him. They easily link this quality with times in and out of school when they need to show empathy to others. It is not unusual for pupils to initiate and organise their own charity events in response to national and international events.

The routines and symbols used in daily worship are firmly grounded in Christian tradition. For example, a member of each class brings the classroom candle to collective worship and each is lit from the hall candle. The candles from all over the school symbolise that God is there, in his pupils, wherever they are. Pupils readily link this symbolism to the school's name: Emmanuel, God is with Us. Various aspects of Anglican tradition are taught throughout the Church calendar year. A weekly school Eucharist is held in the church and led by the vicar. A range of staff members and visitors lead worship and provide pupils with experience of different ways of worshipping. Usually Bible based and reflecting the nature of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the content of worship is creatively planned to be accessible and relevant to Emmanuel's pupils. For example, a time of worship close to ascension day saw pupils releasing balloons and watching them disappear into the distance.

Pupils are aware that times for prayer and reflection can happen at any point in the day. Many pupils make use of opportunities to take time out or write prayers, particularly during times of upset or family illness. They appreciate these opportunities but do not always have the language to talk about spirituality and structure their ideas about it.

Worship is very effectively organised and led by a member of the senior leadership team. Systematic monitoring and evaluation lead to improvements that in turn, feed into future training or programmes of worship. A recent series on the life of Jesus was a result of pupils asking for more Bible stories. A newly established 'Faith Group' includes a cross section of pupils who are beginning to help evaluate worship and plan improvements.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The quality of teaching and learning in religious education (RE) is excellent. This is a result of both an inspirational RE leader and the way that school leaders have invested heavily in time and resources for continual self-evaluation and staff training. RE has a high profile within the school and curriculum time for RE is jealously guarded by senior leaders. Staff are confident in teaching the updated syllabus because of regular, focused training and practical support provided by the subject leader. Regular lesson observations and analysis of the work in pupils' books ensure that the subject leader can direct support appropriately and school leaders can be confident that pupils are progressing well. Because standards of teaching and learning are excellent, standards of achievement in RE are high. All learners can access the curriculum because their individual needs are catered for in a variety of creative ways.

Pupils are inspired by the subject and talk confidently about how their lessons help them to understand themselves and the various communities around them. Very young children have a strong start through multi-sensory experiences, such as creating waves with a parachute when learning about Jesus calming the waves, singing songs and creating parties for Jesus. Through very skilful questioning, even young children are encouraged to think deeply and apply what they learn. For example, after an energetic and exciting time of searching the classroom for ten lost sheep, children had time to reflect on a range of questions, such as 'Does it matter that we can't find the tenth sheep?' and 'If you were lost, who would you want to find you... and why?'

The atmosphere that pervades RE lessons is one of calm, reflection and respect for each other's opinions and beliefs. Pupils talk easily about their feelings and put forward their ideas because they know they are safe to do so. Particularly impressive is the fact that pupils are overtly taught the language of respectful debate and disagreement. Phrases such as '*I see your point but ...*' or '*I may be wrong but my opinion is ...*' enable pupils to discuss controversial issues without perceiving insult in disagreement. Pupils recognise that these skills help them to live the school's motto, 'Always treat others as you would have them do to you'. Older pupils display an impressive knowledge of world religions and effortlessly make valid links between them. They speak proudly about how they are improving their religious literacy and have an acute understanding of how their RE skills will be of benefit in later life.

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

School leaders have a united and explicit vision to instil high aspirations for all. To this end, they work unceasingly to create a welcoming and inclusive school family with a strong and distinctively Christian ethos. The Christian and learning values so effectively illustrated in the A.S.P.I.R.E tree are clearly understood and articulated by pupils, parents, governors and staff. The impact of these, and the school motto 'Always treat others as you would have them do to you' can be heard in the pupils' articulate voices of reason, seen in the classrooms and felt in the cohesive, harmonious community of the school.

There is a strong focus, and a commitment of resources, to building the whole community: pupils, their families, local businesses, the parish church and even the partnership with the Jewels school in Sierra Leone. Pupils are excited to learn about the lives of their Sierra Leonean counterparts and eagerly await letters. Local businesses support school events and in turn become part of the Emmanuel community. Parents of various faiths speak highly of how their pupils are valued and encouraged to share their own experiences. Parents appreciate the respect, love and care shown to their children and, in turn, they work together to support the school's aims. As a result, pupils work hard, are very proud of their community and achieve well.

Teamwork is an enormous strength of the school's leaders. All staff are valued for the strengths that each one brings and all are committed to the whole school vision. Highly effective professional development opportunities, including induction of teachers new to church schools, ensure that quality of teaching is high and young leaders are being developed. Leaders are committed to ensuring that the vision of the school, and church schools in general, live on. To this end they ensure that developing leaders have strong links with the diocese, the deanery, other church schools and the local parish. As a team, the school's leaders are constantly looking to improve the school. They use a continuous cycle of evaluation and strategic planning to ensure that the school, as a Church school, keeps improving. For example, although the previous SIAMS report identified no areas for improvement, leaders have continued to monitor, plan and improve standards.

The school's syllabus and time allocated to RE fully meet the demands of the Church of England Education Office Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education. Arrangements for collective worship meet statutory guidelines.

Relationships between Emmanuel school and Emmanuel church are exceptionally strong and mutually supportive. The vicar is a familiar and well-loved part of the school community. Pupils see and learn a lot from this relationship. They recognise that the adults in the school provide an excellent example through how they choose to live. In the words of a Year 5 child, 'They [the leaders and the vicar] really live their vision rather than just talking about it.'