

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### St Paul's with St Michael's Church of England Primary School

57a Brougham Road, London, E8 4PB

**Current SIAMS inspection grade**

**Outstanding**

**Diocese**

**London**

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Local authority

Hackney

Date of inspection

24 January 2018

Date of last inspection

14 March 2013

Type of school and unique reference number

I00269

Headteacher

Tom Panagiotopoulos

Inspector's name and number

Allan McLean NS823

#### School context

St Paul's with St Michael's has retained a stable senior leadership team since the last inspection. It is a slightly smaller than average-sized primary school that serves pupils from a wide range of minority ethnic groups, the largest being Black African and Black Caribbean. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is higher than average. The number of pupils with special educational needs/and or disabilities is much higher than the national average as is the number of disadvantaged pupils eligible for additional funding. The school was inspected by Ofsted in February 2017 and received an overall effectiveness grade of 'Outstanding'.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Paul's with St Michael's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Christian values shape, support and sustain the academic achievement, personal development and well-being of all pupils.
- The vision and drive of all leaders ensure that the school remains steadfastly on course to fulfil its mission – 'Through God's love, we value, nurture and challenge everyone to achieve their best.'
- Relationships at all levels are informed by Christian values and guarantee a high level of pastoral support for all members of the school community.
- Religious education (RE) is given a high priority within the curriculum, is thoughtfully planned to meet the needs of all pupils and enables and encourages pupils to think deeply about issues of concern.
- The school enjoys strong partnerships with the local parish church and the diocese, which together make a positive contribution to the Christian character of the school.
- A respect for diversity and a celebration of those of different faiths and none is central to the vision of the school, resulting in a harmonious community where pupils achieve exceptionally well.

#### Areas to improve

- Provide even greater opportunity for the children to be involved in planning, leading and evaluating collective worship.

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

The school has developed a clearly defined vision and mission statement alongside a set of values which are firmly embedded in the life of the school. Explicit Christian values permeate every aspect of the school, creating an ethos that enables pupils to achieve academic standards and progress that are above national expectations. The school's Christian values are clearly and creatively displayed in every classroom and throughout the school. They are well known and clearly articulated by all of the school community. As one child reflected on the value of 'hope' he stated, 'Hope is an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. Our values explain everything we do in our school and guide us in how to think and how to behave towards one another.' Christian values inform all decisions regarding policy and practice and underpin the relationships between all members of the community.

All those involved in the school communicate high expectations and aspirations for every child in this diverse community where levels of deprivation are indicated to be some of the highest in the country. This is seen both in the strong progress pupils make, and in their preparation as life long learners. The relationships between all members of this school community are excellent. They are characterised by mutual respect and a genuine sense of a shared set of values regardless of religion. At the heart of these relationships are the school's values of forgiveness, hope, endurance, thankfulness, compassion and peace. Pupils are able to make clear links between these values and the choices they make. The school assists the children in developing a deeper knowledge and understanding of their role as global citizens. Links to charities locally are connected with the charitable work of the parish church. The school also receives letters from children in Angola through a charitable organization 'Build Africa'.

Pupils' spiritual development is excellent. Pupils respond with sensitivity and maturity to collective worship. The links between RE and aspects of the curriculum focused on 'mindfulness' have been extremely well developed in order to provide children with high quality opportunities to reflect on the 'big questions'. Pupils respond reflectively to challenging and practical questions such as 'How do you live your life through hope and how is this different to a wish?' Themes such as this are followed through during collective worship.

Religious education plays an important role in its contribution to the Christian character of the school. Pupils have an excellent knowledge of the Christian faith that makes a significant contribution to their moral and social development. Pupils have developed a clear understanding that Christianity is a world faith in the context of a diverse society. They enjoy the good opportunities which they have to learn about religions and faith communities and demonstrate a deep respect for one another, regardless of faith or cultural background. The RE curriculum, together with the daily act of worship, ensure that pupils understand the roots of the values within the Christian faith.

## **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

Worship makes a positive impact on all aspects of school life. Pupils recognise that distinctively Christian worship is at the heart of St Paul's with St Michael's. They readily describe how it is the cornerstone for all that the school does and reinforces their knowledge and understanding of the place of Jesus Christ within the Christian faith. They also describe how certain themes guide them in their own lives. Parents comment on how collective worship has an impact on the way their children relate to adults and other children: 'They use empathy and respect to sort out their problems. It has a positive impact in the way my daughter deals with every day problems or concerns. It provides a clear guiding structure to their lives.' The worship is very well planned through the year and relates well to both the church calendar and the school's Christian values. Children take an active leadership role during collective worship in class and in special services held at the church. These opportunities should now be extended further into other acts of collective worship alongside a more systematic form of evaluation.

Leaders ensure that worship covers a broad range of Christian themes with a strong emphasis on the school's Christian values and on key Christian festivals. This enables pupils to have a very good understanding of the nature of worship, the Christian faith and Anglican traditions and practice. Pupils speak very positively about the impact of special services such as the Eucharist. All members of staff attend collective worship and parents are also invited, thus reinforcing its importance to the whole community. Worship is led weekly by the vicar and curate of St Michael & All Angels church, providing different forms of Anglican worship, reflected in the use of liturgy and hymns. Each act of worship is distinctly Christian in character, seeks to deepen the children's theological understanding and provide pupils and staff with time to reflect on how it will impact on their daily lives. This, together with the prominent place of prayer across the school ensures that worship is a spiritual experience of real significance. Prayer happens at least twice a day in classrooms, prayer boxes are available for pupils throughout the school and these prayers are used effectively to support collective worship. Worship allows pupils the opportunity to begin to

develop an age-appropriate understanding of complex Christian beliefs such as that of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

Religious education is given the status of a 'core subject'. The impact of changes to the RE policy and scheme of work has led to pupils making rapid progress. Standards are at least in line with national expectations and in many cases are higher due to the excellent progress being made. Pupils are able to apply their strong subject knowledge to a wide range of circumstances. The pupils consistently make reference to finding RE lessons exciting, engaging and interesting. They are stimulated to grapple with some of the big questions within Christianity and other world faiths. They frequently make comparisons between religions, considering the similarities and differences. Teachers are not afraid to take risks in presenting challenging questions to the pupils. The impact of teaching over time is evident in the pupils having been well equipped with appropriate language to explore such questions. Pupils make excellent progress within lessons. The quality of teaching is consistently good and often outstanding. Lessons observed engage children through an effective hook at the start of the lesson. They develop pupils' subject specific vocabulary and deepen their understanding of the topic through carefully planned questions. Conversations with pupils illustrate the impact of the teaching and the deep learning that is taking place. Pupils appreciate the time taken by teachers to write reflective comments after certain pieces of work. These comments often prompt deeper thought that requires a further response from the pupil.

The governors have adopted the diocesan syllabus and the headteacher and curriculum leader have worked hard to adapt this to reflect the school's own values and personal, social, health and citizenship curriculum. The importance of leadership in RE is emphasised by the involvement of all senior leaders in the introduction of the new scheme of work. Working closely with the diocesan adviser, the school has developed the foundations of an effective assessment system that takes into consideration the opportunities children will need in order to demonstrate they are working at greater depth. The leadership team has implemented a thorough and robust approach to working with governors through regular presentations and reports on the impact of changes to RE. Governors are involved in the process of reviewing RE books with members of the staff team. As a result, pupils' work is closely monitored in order to ensure that high standards are being met. Lesson observations in RE are also part of an annual monitoring cycle. Teachers are given feedback from this to enable them to build upon their good practice.

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

School leaders and governors have shown determination in ensuring that a drive for high standards is achieved through a focus on the spiritual development and well-being of pupils. They can describe the way in which the school's Christian character and values are at the heart of its success. The school's mission statement and values are articulated and understood by all members of the school community. As a result of careful planning and consultation they sum up the school's priorities and shape the thinking of all members of the community. Leaders and governors, supported by church members, show a high degree of pastoral concern. Parents feel strongly that each child is nurtured, cared for and celebrated as an individual. Parents and pupils express the view that the headteacher and members of the clergy are always present and available in and around the school. Parents comment that the school leadership team always take the time to listen to their concerns and are very approachable.

Governors receive detailed information on developments in RE. Governors are extremely knowledgeable about the school and have many formal and informal measures for monitoring the success of the school as a church school. Consequently, they ensure that both worship and RE meet statutory requirements. The London Diocesan Board for Schools adviser works closely with governors and senior leaders to provide effective challenge, support and professional development. There is a strong focus on professional development that contributes significantly to Christian leadership both within and beyond the school, with the experienced headteacher providing support and advice to other schools. Succession planning is carefully considered resulting in a stable and effective staff team. The close partnership with the local church is a great strength. This can be seen in the prayer life of the church and the school and the close links to holiday clubs and special services. Mutual respect and support enable both institutions to flourish and to fulfil their mission to the school and the local community.

SIAMS report January 2017, St Paul's with St Michael's CE VA Primary School, 57a Brougham Road, London, E8 4PB