

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St George's Hanover Square CE Primary School

South Street, Mayfair, London W1K 2XH	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	London
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Westminster
Date/s of inspection	27 March 2017
Date of last inspection	December 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided Primary 101130
Headteacher	Judith Standing
Inspector's name and number	John Viner NS144

School context

St George's (Hanover Square) is a smaller than average primary school located in central Mayfair. It serves the parish of St George's Hanover Square and has links with the neighbouring Grosvenor Chapel. Its 190 pupils reflect the rich diversity of the area with a much higher than average proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. A lower than average proportion of pupils have special educational needs. There is a lower than average proportion of disadvantaged pupils, eligible for additional government funding. Around a fifth of pupils attend church. The school was recently inspected by Ofsted and judged to be good.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St George's (Hanover Square) as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The specific Christian values which the school promotes define its purpose and are evident in all aspects of its work.
- This is a truly worshipping community where collective worship is inspirational and inclusive and where prayer is a key part of every day.
- Religious Education (RE) is regarded as a core subject and, although there are improvements to be made, plans are already in hand to bring them about.
- The impressive partnership with the churches and their clergy adds significant capacity to the school's work with its pupils and their families.
- The headteacher, key staff, governors and clergy are united behind an ambitious Christian vision for the school that is continuing the school's historic witness as a place of faith as well as learning.

Areas to improve

- Deepen the shared understanding of spirituality among all staff so that pupils experience consistent guidance in developing their spiritual awareness.
- Review the way that RE lessons are planned so that there is a clear focus on learning, a deepening of pupils' understanding of the nature and purpose of faith and the consistent development of their key skills of enquiry and reflection.
- Review the assessment of RE so that teachers have an accurate understanding of the progress their pupils are making across the key areas of study and can use this information to deepen pupils' thinking.

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

The school has identified six key Christian values that define its purpose. Although introduced quite recently, these values have quickly become embedded so that they are known and articulated by pupils and by their parents. They are reinforced through the regular 'Values Days' that are popular among stakeholders and well attended. Parents say how much their children look forward to 'Values Day' and that they often bring these Christian values into their conversation at home. This Christian distinctiveness underpins the school's work and is evident in all aspects of its life, influencing relationships and informing practice. This sense of the spiritual is recognised by most of the school community and so, irrespective of their personal faith or belief, all pupils are able to develop their spiritual personality. As a result, they are confident with the language of faith and respect each other's points of view. The majority of pupils attend regularly and on time, all work hard and behave well. They make good progress from their starting points and standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are well above the national average.

The Christian values that the school promotes inspire the excellent, warm, trusting relationships between and among adults and pupils so that each member of the school community knows that they are valued and special. Pupils say that this makes the school a place where everyone cares for each other and they are proud of the friendships they share with people of different races and faiths. As a result, pupils develop positive attitudes of tolerance and respect and they celebrate the diversity of faith in a way that has a constructive impact on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils know that religious education plays an important role in affirming the school's Christian distinctiveness. They are excited and challenged by the subject and, through celebrating diversity - for example, through the International Days that are a feature of school life - they understand that Christianity is a world faith in the context of a multicultural society.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is at the heart of the school. It is a key part of each day and pupils universally say how much they look forward to it, regardless of their own faith and belief. Worship is inclusive, so that all who attend it are affirmed and their spiritual awareness deepened. Pupils of other faiths say that some things, like prayer and forgiveness, are universal and therefore that this distinctly Christian worship helps to strengthen their own faith and understanding. Worship is distinctly Christian and biblical, rooted in the person and character of Jesus. It is also Trinitarian so that, even young pupils can explain how Christians regard God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Worship is Anglican in style, using appropriate liturgical responses and the outward, visible symbols of a cross and candles. Because the school benefits from a close relationship with the two churches of the parish, and their clergy who regularly lead worship in church, pupils experience complementary Anglican traditions, learning key prayers and hymns that they are likely to encounter in a range of churches.

Worship is carefully structured and planned by headteacher, key staff and clergy around themes drawn from the Church's year and the school's specific Christian values. A variety of leaders and styles of worship ensure that it is always fresh and interesting and pupils say how much they enjoy both the more intimate reflective times, when worship is in the form of a class assembly, and the regular weekly services that take place in the splendour of Grosvenor Chapel. These chapel services are popular with parents who also enjoy coming into the school for acts of worship led by their children. When pupils attend worship they do so enthusiastically. The school has a strong musical tradition and there are opportunities for pupils to contribute to collective worship by playing instruments, while their singing is tuneful, enthusiastic and truly worshipful. From the time they join the school, pupils learn the nature and purpose of prayer and there are very many excellent opportunities for pupils of all faiths or none to engage in thoughtful personal reflection and prayer. Some of their prayers are used in class worship, at lunchtimes or at the end of the school day. They are also used in worship, when pupils readily volunteer to lead prayers, many having the confidence to pray openly with no written guidance. Worship is carefully and regularly monitored by drawing on feedback from a range of stakeholders so that it leads to planned improvement. The pupil who declared in a prayer that, "I will make the world a better place" sums up the impact of the school's worship in developing the faith and commitment of its pupils.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Standards in religious education are in line with core subjects, being around or above national expectations, although sometimes work in RE books is more incomplete and less carefully presented than in other subjects. However, the majority of pupils make good progress that is partly the result of the deep spiritual confidence that the school's Christian character affords. Pupils learn the key skills of reflection, evaluation and enquiry and some ask questions

that are deep and challenging. Teaching, although good overall, is variable with some lessons being too closely focused on aspects of English than on the RE. Teachers' planning does not always make clear what the lesson is focused on and this means that sometimes pupils are not given enough opportunity to extend their thinking. Despite these sometimes unclear objectives, all pupils learn a lot about Christianity and other faiths and how these lessons can apply to their own lives. Therefore, overall, teaching is successful and, by the time they leave the school, the majority of pupils have a comprehensive understanding of Christianity and a thorough grounding in the Bible. They remember the key points of the other faiths they have studied, but not as thoroughly or deeply as they might.

While there is a robust system of regular assessment of pupils' progress, teachers' marking does not always deepen pupils' understanding of the nature of faith and belief. As a result, although pupils learn the key skills of RE, they do not always have the opportunity to exercise and extend them. The school is updating its programme of study and, in this, is well supported by diocesan officers. It is also developing its assessment processes and is aware that further work is required before it is as effective as it could be.

The leadership of RE is very strong. With the support of diocesan officers, the school has strengthened leadership by providing high quality training for both the current RE leader and the shared responsibility holder, on maternity leave at the time of the inspection. Training needs for staff are also identified and both linked clergy are actively involved in leading workshops to develop teachers' subject knowledge. This strong leadership has led to robust systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of RE across the school and ambitious plans for the subject's further development.

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

The headteacher's personal faith and purposeful leadership contribute to an ambitious Christian vision for the school that is shared by key leaders, governors and clergy. Although not explicit in the school's motto, this vision is clearly articulated in its recently reviewed values and it is lived out in the re-affirmation of its Christian character. Parents of all faiths and none recognise the commitment of leaders and governors to the achievement and wellbeing of their children. They speak movingly of the impact that a growing spiritual awareness has on their children's sense of compassion for others, such as the young pupil who asked his mother if they could pray for a homeless person.

There are excellent and strong systems for keeping the school's Christian distinctiveness under review that leads to accurate self-evaluation. The Faith Group of representative stakeholders meets regularly and takes pupils views into account as part of their ongoing review. This ensures that school leaders and governors, have a clear understanding of the priorities for improvement and plan effectively to address them, directly focused on the academic and personal development of all pupils. This strong Christian leadership has secured excellent collective worship and is moving RE forward, with a genuine commitment to the professional development of all staff and the RE leader in particular. As a result, leaders and governors share a commitment both to the future leadership needs of the school and to the wider church school community.

There are close links with the diocese and other church schools which are of mutual benefit. The headteacher represents the diocese on a borough committee and has provided leadership support to other schools. The partnership with the churches of the parish is impressive because of the regular involvement of the clergy in the life of the school. Clergy not only contribute to worship but they guide pupils in writing prayers, lead staff RE training and fulfil a valuable chaplaincy role to the school community. Parents value these links and demonstrate this in their attendance at the regular chapel services. They welcome the introduction of periodic coffee mornings for parents following the school act of worship. Through their association with the local churches, pupils benefit from links with the wider Anglican communion, including a Zimbabwe community, which the school and church support, together with more local charities. Thus, pupils learn what it is to put Christian love into action. The strong partnership with the parish adds significant capacity to the school and unites it with the churches in service of their community.

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