

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St John the Divine Church of England Primary School

Warham Street, Camberwell New Road, London, SE5 0SX

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Southwark
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Name of multi-academy trust / federation	NA
Local Authority	Lambeth
Dates of inspection	13 July 2018
Date of last inspection	June 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 100614
Headteacher	Catherine Warland
Inspector's name and number	Pamela Draycott (161)

School context

This small school serves a diverse area. Most pupils are of Black African or Black Caribbean heritages, with a wide range of other ethnicities also represented. The majority are from Christian family backgrounds. The percentage who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average, as is the percentage of socially or economically disadvantaged pupils. The percentage with some sort of special educational need or disability (SEND) is just above average. There are more girls on roll than boys. There is a strong and longstanding link with the parish church.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St John the Divine Voluntary Aided Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The effective leadership of the headteacher, supported by senior leaders, staff and the governing body, successfully promotes its Christian vision sustaining its work as a church school.
- Appropriately high academic expectations, very good behaviour and mutually respectful relationships clearly express the school's Christian mission statement, motto and values.
- Both religious education (RE) and the worship programme express very well the school's Christian vision and impact positively on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development.
- A dynamic partnership with the parish church makes a substantial contribution to the school's distinctive Christian character.

Areas to improve

- Fill vacancies on the governing body, so that it is strengthened in its shared role of providing effective support and challenge, ensuring that its work is well known across the school community.
- Extend the role of the school's faith group and worship leaders so that pupils are involved in planning the wider programme and not only special services.

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

The school's Christian underpinning is clearly evident across its life and work. For example, its motto of TEAM (Together Everyone Achieves More) is expressly linked to biblical teaching (1 Corinthians 12:27) and is well understood by pupils and adults. Pupils experience a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular and enrichment activities and visits to support them in experiencing 'life in its fullness' (John 10:10). This leads to a consistent focus on developing pupils both academically and personally. Consequently, pupils of different backgrounds and abilities thrive. They make at least good and often better progress from their various starting points so that academic standards are consistently above the national and local authority averages. Any gap in attainment and progress between different groups of pupils, such as the more vulnerable and their peers and between girls and boys, is minimal. The school has effective evaluation and assessment practices in place in order to closely monitor pupils' attainment and progress and to implement appropriate interventions as necessary. Pupils display very positive attitudes to learning and are considerate, polite and confident in their interactions with others. Mutually respectful relationships and a strong sense of belonging enhances the school's 'family feel'. Pupils know that they are listened to and that they are well cared for within school. This means that attendance is consistently above the national average and that behaviour is very good. On those very few occasions when attendance or behaviour gets in the way of learning, the school works closely and compassionately with a pupil and their family to bring about a resolution. The school's behaviour policy expresses its Christian values, such as respect, forgiveness and justice, very well. This is consistently applied. As an expression of its Christian foundation SMSC development is given a high priority. For example, opportunities are well taken within a broad and balanced curriculum to help pupils be mindful and reflect on issues of spiritual, moral and ethical concern. Examples of this can particularly be seen within RE and across the Connected Curriculum, which addresses links between subjects around particular themes. Opportunities for giving and for fund-raising for charity are very well supported by the pupils and their families as well as by staff. As one pupil reflected, 'Being generous to others is what Jesus would do, so it's what we do as a school'. Through the RE curriculum pupils develop an appreciation of difference and diversity as they consider Christianity alongside other world faiths, appropriately addressing similarities and differences. 'RE is fun and it helps you think about what you believe and respect what others believe', as one pupil said.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The worship programme is a central plank in sustaining and promoting the school's Christian foundation. It is very well planned, drawing on the school's mission and values and Christian teaching, practices and festivals. It provides a range of opportunities to consider how Christian teaching impacts on life today. Consequently, pupils understand the importance of the Bible and the centrality of Jesus and his teaching for Christians. They have a developing and age-appropriate appreciation of key Christian beliefs such as that of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils and staff meet together for daily worship in a variety of groupings from whole school, key stage and class groups to very small meditation groups. This variety enriches their experience. Worship is also led by a variety of staff, clergy and pupil worship leaders, as well as visitors. This variety provides different approaches and helps to maintain interest and relevance. Pupils participate and respond positively to worship and engage very well with it. They are regularly and appropriately involved in leading worship and are respectful and focused during worship opportunities. The pupil faith group meets regularly to evaluate worship and the wider Christian and inclusive life of the school. They, alongside the pupil worship leaders, have fewer opportunities to plan worship. The programme is well extended through visits for school worship to the parish church and through the regular Eucharist for Key Stage 2 pupils. Parents are invited to join when worship is held in church or in school when their children are involved in leading worship. This contributes well to the sense of community. Worship in school complements worship styles in church. Thus pupils are gaining an appreciation of aspects of Anglican worship. Pupils understand that prayer is 'important and is not just talking to God but listening as well'. They know that there are different types of prayer such as, 'thanking God, praising God and asking God to act'. The significance of prayer as, 'a calming and peaceful experience' and 'helping you when you feel upset or need help' is also a key part of the pupils' understanding of prayer. They know the Lord's Prayer, which is a regular feature of worship. A range of opportunities, including at lunchtime and before going home, as well as through prayer areas in classrooms, means that prayer forms part of the rhythm of the school day. Pupils and adults see its relevance to school life and for many to their own religious and spiritual development. Staff prayers, particularly on a Monday morning, focus on school needs. The staff room has its own prayer and reflection area which is indicative of the importance of prayer for adults as well as for pupils. The impact of worship is closely monitored and pupils' views and suggestions are taken into account. This leads to its relevance being reinforced and developed further.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The importance of RE in supporting the school's Christian ethos is rightly recognised. Pupils enjoy and respond very well to the range of content and approaches they experience. Discussion, asking questions and reflection play key roles across the age groups. In this way, pupils develop enquiry, information gathering, reflection and evaluative skills in age-appropriate ways. There is a respectful learning environment which enables pupils to share their personal ideas and beliefs as well as listen respectfully to others. This contributes very well to their learning. The teaching of RE is at least good and the balance of focusing on Christianity and other world faiths fitting. The school has recently been awarded the RE Quality Mark (Silver) in recognition of the effectiveness of the subject in supporting pupils' academic and personal development. A wide range of activities are provided which help to maintain interest and support learning well. Assessment practice has been improved since the time of the previous denominational inspection. It closely follows whole school practice. Teachers mark work regularly. This includes providing extension thoughts or questions for pupils to respond to. However, time is not consistently given for pupils to do this. Standards are broadly in line with literacy levels across the school. Oral responses demonstrate a high level of engagement and thoughtful response to curriculum content. Pupils are respectful of others' views and beliefs. From their various starting points, pupils are making good and some better progress. Regular support and monitoring is provided by the committed RE subject leader. This feeds into the subject action plan and ensures that RE contributes positively to school life.

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

The school's Christian underpinning is effectively sustained by the headteacher, and well supported by senior leaders, other staff and governors. Thus its Christian foundation is key to school development. Governors provide overall good support and challenge. However, there are vacancies on the governing body which limits its impact on school life. Existing governors are regular visitors to school events but the impact of their work within school is not well shared or understood by the wider school community, especially by parents. The chairperson of the governing body knows the school well and works closely with the headteacher and other senior staff. This supports the school's self-evaluation and leads to relevant and effective action planning for sustaining and improving practice. Effective leadership for RE and worship have been secured and both areas meet statutory requirements. The key issue for improvement in the previous denominational inspection was to improve assessment practices in RE. This has been well addressed. The school takes the wellbeing of staff seriously and provides effective personal and professional development opportunities for working within the church school sector. Links with the Diocese and with other church schools in the area are strong and beneficial to the school. For example, the moderation of pupil work takes place across different schools; the headteacher meets with other church school headteachers for mutual support and to work on particular aspects of school development; diocesan meetings and courses are attended by relevant staff. Actions from such events are closely implemented across school life. Parents are supportive of the school's Christian ethos, rightly recognising that, 'the values provide a firm foundation for growing up, whatever your religion'. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress. The relationship between church and school is strong and mutually supportive. Examples of this are wide-ranging. The incumbent is an active member of the governing body and its vice-chairperson. He is well-known by staff, pupils and many parents. The pastoral assistant and other lay people visit the school regularly. The church building is well used for school worship and the school visits regularly on other occasions, such as for the recent Windrush Generation exhibition. The girls' and boys' choirs each lead worship in church on a Sunday on a monthly basis. Senior leaders from the school attend the church on these occasions as do many parents. There is a strong sense across the school community of the parish church being their church.

SIAMS report (July 2018) St John the Divine CE (VA), Camberwell, London, SE5 0SX