

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St James & St John Church of England Primary School

4 Craven Terrace, London, W2 3QD

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	London Diocese
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Westminster
Date/s of inspection	28 June 2017
Date of last inspection	26 April 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	101132
Headteacher	Mark Hewitt
Inspector's name and number	Allan McLean 823

School context

St James & St John CE Primary is a one-form entry school in the central London parish of St James, Sussex Gardens. The school includes a nursery and is split across two sites. 24 different ethnic groups form the community, the main groups being white western European and white British. 71% have English as a second language. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for additional funding is lower than the national average. The headteacher has been in post at the school since September 2016. During the past two years the school has seen high mobility in changes to staffing both within the teaching team and office staff. The school achieved a 'good' grade from Ofsted on the 29th November 2016.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St James & St John as a Church of England school are good

- The partnership with the two local parish churches makes a significant contribution to the school's Christian ethos.
- The value placed upon each individual, and the provision of a nurturing and supportive learning environment positively impacts on the achievement of the whole child.
- The wide range of experiences pupils are given to encourage their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development positively impacts on their behaviour and their attitude to one another.
- A respect for diversity and a celebration of those of different faiths and none is central to the mission of the school, whilst establishing a clear set of Christian values.

Areas to improve

- Embed the new Religious Education (RE) scheme of work to ensure clearer progression and challenge.
- To make the newly agreed set of values known through the RE curriculum and Collective worship.
- To enable all Collective worship leaders, including pupils, to use formal systems of monitoring and evaluation of Collective worship in a way that develops and enhances practice.

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

The school ensures that it serves the local community through an admissions policy that seeks to include those of all faiths within the local community. The school's creed is well established and focuses on the values of 'love, wisdom, respect, care and happiness'. The creed is known and understood by all members of the school community and each of the values within the creed are linked explicitly to Bible verses. Parents describe these values as 'the seeds that are sown in childhood which provide the moral values and wisdom for the future'. All members of the school community thrive in this nurturing and caring environment and this is reflected in their academic success. Overall achievement is strong and shows continued improvement.

Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and the staff team works hard to engage with families. As a result attendance figures are slightly above the national average. Great value is placed on each member of the whole school community. Religious education provides pupils with opportunities to discuss similarities and differences between the different faiths represented in this diverse school community. This has created a culture where pupils show a high level of respect for one another and their beliefs. When speaking about the school, both parents and children refer to the feeling of being part of a 'small village community in the heart of a big city', emphasising how the Christian character of the school creates a culture where staff demonstrate a high level of care to everyone in the community. This reflects the school vision of 'A commitment to a living Christian faith... recognising and affirming the full diversity of our school community'.

The school is also actively involved in a great deal of charity work led by the pupils through the work of the school council, such as the recent NSPCC fundraising event. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely well supported through the act of daily worship and reflection time and the offer of a wide curriculum. Special events such as the International day and poetry competition take place in the church and as a result strengthen the relationship between the school, church and the local community.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is central to school life and makes a positive impact on the school community. Worship is jointly planned by the leadership team and the clergy. Themes include links to the RE curriculum and the key Christian festivals which are celebrated at both St James and St John Churches. The school should give further consideration as to how collective worship could be used to reflect the school's newly established Christian values throughout the year.

The school is very well supported by clergy from the churches of St James and St John. As a result pupils develop a secure knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith including an age appropriate understanding of more complex Christian beliefs such as that of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Parents too appreciate the support and visible presence of the clergy. They comment positively on the unique skills that members of the clergy bring to collective worship, and their ability to engage with children's questions sensitively and appropriately.

During their daily act of worship, pupils are given regular opportunities to pause and reflect upon biblical teaching, often resulting in practical acts of service to others within the school and beyond. This can be seen during a recent act of collective worship, held in response to the Grenfell disaster, which is local to many of the families. Pupils spoke of the impact this had on them and how they had raised money to provide support for families.

Worship is specifically Christian but it is also inclusive of the whole school community. Parents of all faiths and none believe it is an important part of school life and provides children with clear moral guidance. As a result there are no withdrawals from collective worship. Prayer is an important part of school life and is naturally woven throughout the school day. Regular opportunities for both personal and collective prayer are given. Children's prayers are written on paper leaves in the classroom and shared during collective worship. Consideration has been given to secure a learning environment that encourages pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The staff and governors have developed some formal systems for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of collective worship. The school should now consider how all worship leaders, including the pupils, can be fully involved in the monitoring and evaluation process in order to see an even greater impact on the quality of collective worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious education has gained a higher profile within the school this academic year and pupils clearly enjoy the subject. Standards of attainment are generally in line with national expectations and consistent with standards in

other core subjects. Most pupils are working at least within the expected level and sometimes higher. Teaching in RE is good. Where teaching is best, the work is appropriately pitched and carefully planned, providing challenge and support to meet the differing needs of the pupils. Children are given the time and space to explore thought provoking questions. However, not all lessons engender this level of curiosity or enquiry.

Progression in the curriculum is clear and the senior leadership team have ensured a new and carefully mapped out curriculum is in place. Teachers and leaders have worked hard to address this issue from the previous inspection. The marking of pupils' work affirms what has been done well, and in some incidences, poses relevant questions in order to extend pupils' thinking. Effective planning and good teaching enables pupils to develop a broad and accurate religious vocabulary. The RE curriculum makes a positive contribution to both the school's Christian values and the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The teaching of Christianity is effective and this is evident in the pupils' secure knowledge of the Christian faith. The curriculum provides a good balance between helping pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding and also to reflect on the significance of religion in the world today.

The headteacher has rightly identified the need to provide staff with appropriate training to extend their subject knowledge and delivery of the new diocesan syllabus which will be fully implemented from September 2017. Senior leaders have established clear action plans and a robust monitoring system which has led to significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning in RE, particularly over the past six months where the impact is evident in ensuring there is a balance of learning about religion and learning from religion.

Reviews from the Local Authority and the diocesan adviser have helped provide governors with an external view and assisted them in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching in the subject. This is now beginning to have an impact on improved standards evidenced in lesson observations and the children's books. RE has been given a significantly high status in the school and features prominently in the school improvement plan.

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

All members of the school community speak positively about belonging to this church school and readily give examples of how they benefit from being part of this vibrant community, regardless of any personal belief.

A new school vision has been developed over this academic year to ensure it is an 'excellent school providing both academic and personal development for every child, inspired by Christian values'. All members of the school community have been widely consulted and as a result have a shared sense of ownership of the vision and values. The outworking of the school's Christian vision, values and creed, creates a nurturing and supportive learning environment in which pupils and adults flourish. These Christian values, which are now being clearly articulated, should be shared widely and confidently, so that there is an even clearer understanding of the role the school plays in serving the local community as a Church of England School.

Senior leaders have a good understanding of all aspects of the school, ensuring high standards of achievement and well-being are maintained. The headteacher recognises the importance of equipping senior leaders to work successfully in a church school and as a result leaders are benefitting from diocesan training. Leaders are incisive and accurate in their self-evaluation as they know both the strengths of the school and the areas for development.

Governors regularly visit the school and are involved in elements of self-evaluation. Strong and effective partnerships are also enjoyed between the school and the parish churches of St James and St John. The support provided by the clergy makes a significant contribution to the Christian distinctiveness within the school. There is a high level of commitment and time dedicated to the school from the clergy, both within the day-to-day life of the school and on the governing board. This helps to ensure that the Christian character of the school remains at the centre of all that the school seeks to achieve. Parents speak warmly of the school and the care and relationships that are fostered through the Christian ethos.

SIAMS report June 2017, St James & St John CE Primary School, Craven Terrace, London, W2 3QD