

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St John's and St Clement's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Adys Road, East Dulwich, London, SE15 4DY

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Southwark
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Southwark
Date of inspection	16 May 2017
Date of last inspection	May 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary – Voluntary Aided - 100830
Headteacher	Joseph Bell
Inspector's name and number	Pamela Draycott - 161

School context

This larger than average primary school has a ten place hearing impaired unit. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities is well above the national average. The percentage from disadvantaged backgrounds is slightly above average. Around 50 percent are White British with a wide range of other ethnicities represented. Around 70 percent are from Christian backgrounds with a small percentage of other faiths represented. Around 25 percent of families claim no religious affiliation. The headteacher has been in post since September 2016. There have been changes to clergy in both linked churches since the previous denominational inspection.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St John's and St Clement's Voluntary Aided Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- A strong Christian and inclusive ethos underpins the school's work. It is appropriately expressed through its mission statement and values and impacts positively on the caring relationships across the school and the very good behaviour of pupils.
- The worship programme is a strength of the school as it contributes significantly to its Christian and inclusive ethos and the deep sense of belonging and community evident across the school.
- Religious education (RE) has a high profile and the revised curriculum and approaches to learning across the subject are raising expectations and outcomes for pupils' attainment and progress
- The leadership of the headteacher, senior leaders, the RE subject leader and governors in continuing to shape developments in line with the school's underpinning Christian ethos.

Areas to improve

- As part of the school's development cycle, revisit its Christian vision, mission and values so that they are refreshed and 'owned' by the current generation of staff, pupils and parents and drive forward continued improvements as a church school.
- Embed the changes to content and assessment practice in RE across the school in the light of the revised diocesan scheme of work.

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

The school's mission statement, 'love of God, love of life, love of learning' is expressed well and impacts positively on pupils' good academic and personal development. Its mission is exemplified through its shared values of honesty, respect, co-operation and responsibility. These values are expressly linked to biblical teaching and are well known by both staff and pupils. They clearly influence the strong relationships in evidence, as well as pupils' very good behaviour and attitudes to learning. As a Year 6 pupil reflected, 'It's important to put the values into practice. So instead of holding grudges it's important to show respect to others just like Jesus did.' There is a caring and positive learning environment which supports pupils' well. They are developing the ability to express their thoughts clearly and with confidence orally, in written form and creatively. A refocusing on improving the quality and range of teaching activities over this academic year is beginning to reap benefits in terms of pupils making good progress. Whilst the gap between the disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and their peers remains, it is showing strong signs of closing. This means that attainment is around the national average with a significant minority of pupils entering the school below national expectations. Pupils feel happy and safe in school which consequently means that attendance is above the national average. As a reflection of its Christian and inclusive nature, on those few occasions where behaviour or attendance gets in the way of learning, the school works consistently and fairly with pupils and their families to bring about improvement.

A good range of spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development opportunities are provided through the curriculum and through a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. The curriculum, which is in the process of further development, has an increasing focus on encouraging creativity, questioning and reflection. Pupils respond well to these opportunities. Pupils are able to take responsibility for themselves and others. Charitable giving is clearly seen as a reflection of the school's Christian underpinning, as expressed by a Year 5 pupil saying, 'Giving to people in need is a way of showing that you are thankful to God for everything that you have'. The school celebrates its own cultural diversity as a strength which contributes to pupils developing a wider knowledge and understanding of the world. RE is effective in supporting pupils' appreciation of a variety of religious beliefs and practices, including seeing Christianity as a multi-cultural, world faith. Thus RE makes a good contribution to SMSC development and to the school's overarching Christian and inclusive ethos.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is central to the school's daily life ably supporting a deep sense of belonging and community. It clearly celebrates God's love and Christian teaching, relating it closely to life in the world today. It is presented in open and inclusive ways so that all pupils and adults can take part, irrespective of their own faith or non-faith position. Thus it supports the school's sense of community and inclusion well. The worship programme is very well led and managed by senior leaders and governors, including clergy. The Christian year, biblical teaching, the school's values and a focus on different qualities needed for learning form the backbone of the themes chosen. These raise aspiration and are delivered in ways that support SMSC development closely. Worship is presented by a variety of people, including the headteacher, clergy and class teachers, supported by their pupils. Through their experience of worship pupils are developing an age-appropriate understanding of the importance of the Bible and of Jesus for Christians and an appreciation of the Christian view of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Key Christian prayers, including the Lord's Prayer and the Grace are said regularly. A prayer tree in each classroom augments pupils' understanding of prayer and its relevance to daily life well. Worship in school is enhanced through periodic worship taking place in church for particular festivals as well as Years 5 and 6 attending the Eucharist regularly. The experience of the Eucharist has just started to be provided for Years 3 and 4 to enrich their appreciation of Christian worship further. A pupil faith group has been formed during this academic year. These pupils take their role very seriously and contribute to leading worship in school and church well. However, pupils outside of this group have more limited opportunities to lead worship in whole school and key stage gatherings. Pupils engage well in worship entering respectfully, listening closely and joining in with the opening sentence and response, and prayers with understanding. Singing of traditional and contemporary Christian hymns and songs is enjoyed and enhances the worship experience very well. As a Year 4 pupil reflected, 'Singing is inspirational and helps you think about God and helping others.' The programme is monitored and evaluated by leaders and pupils and feedback contributes to continued refinement and improvement. This in turn enables worship to maintain its valued part in school life.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

RE has a high profile across the school being recognised as a 'core subject' alongside literacy and mathematics. Attainment is broadly in line with national expectations with many pupils making good progress from their various

starting points. Pupils appropriately develop their knowledge and understanding of the teachings and practices of Christianity as well as other faiths such as Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism. Activities are well planned to encourage pupils to reflect on the significance of religious beliefs and traditions for believers and for themselves, irrespective of their faith or non-faith position. The school is in the process of incorporating into its curriculum aspects of the reviewed diocesan scheme of work for RE. The revisions made are already impacting positively, due to higher expectations and a broader range of activities to aid learning incorporated into it. In recognition of this a Year 5 pupil said that RE had improved over this academic year because, 'teachers are asking more challenging questions which make you think more'. The majority of teaching is good with some outstanding practice. Pupils enjoy the range of activities and approaches they engage in during their RE lessons because, as a Year 3 pupil said, 'You don't do the same thing all the time. My favourite is when we look at symbols and say what they mean'. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. Some of this marking is not closely matched to the learning outcomes for the lesson or group of lessons being focused on. There are some limited opportunities for pupils to respond to the marking and thus improve their work. This is not however a consistent part of school practice. The subject leader is supporting her colleagues well with the implementation of the new schemes of work by providing information and being a 'sounding board' for activities. She leads by example with the teaching and assessment practice in her class closely mirroring the expectations she is laying out across the curriculum. The subject development plan rightly identifies the need to continue the implementation of the diocesan scheme of work. RE is well monitored and governors are kept closely informed of developments.

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

The headteacher, well supported by his senior leaders, staff and governors, is ensuring that the school's Christian underpinning continues to have a clear focus and impacts positively on its work. Self-evaluation of the school's Christian foundation is accurate and based on encouraging all to flourish and achieve their best as 'children of God'. Whilst the school's Christian mission and values are having a positive impact, it is eight years since they were last reviewed. The new headteacher has rightly identified the need to address them again as a community to ensure that they continue to drive the school forward in its next phase of development. Recruitment procedures and ongoing professional development for working within the church school sector are supportive of staff and clearly focused on pupils' needs. This in turn means that pupils and their families feel valued and well-supported. Parents recognise that the Christian foundation of the school is 'lived out' through for example the care shown by staff and the way in which they are 'prepared to listen to any concern and deal quickly with it'. Opportunities for parents to gain support for helping their children with areas such as reading, mathematics and homework are in place alongside support for encouraging their wellbeing and personal development. There is a thriving parent teacher association and a prayer group that meets regularly to pray for the school. Governors challenge and support the work of the school well. They are committed to the school's Christian distinctiveness as exemplified through them gaining the Bishop's Certificate in Church School Governance recently. Governors have secured very good leadership for both RE and worship which leads to good practice in both areas. RE and worship are appropriately resourced and meet statutory requirements. Since the previous denominational inspection the school has had some changes to staffing, including a new headteacher, there is a new incumbent at one of the link churches and a recent vacancy at the other. Just over a year ago a pupil at the school died. These have had a big impact on the life of the school but through the changes and sadness its Christian underpinning has supported it well. Issues from the previous denominational inspection have been addressed and are now refocused in the SIAMS development plan. The school is benefiting from increasing its links with other Church of England primary schools in the vicinity, which provides, for example, good opportunities for considering RE and worship developments within a wider context. They also give a positive indication of the school's increasingly outward looking character. The school draws well on help offered by the Diocese, for example, through taking part in training and development opportunities for governors and staff.

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