

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St John of Jerusalem Church of England Primary School

Kingshold Road, London, E9 7JF

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Good

Diocese

London Diocese

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Local authority

Hackney

Date/s of inspection

23 May 2017

Date of last inspection

9 May 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

Voluntary Aided 100270

Headteacher

Asarena Simon

Inspector's name and number

Allan McLean 823

School context

St John of Jerusalem Church of England Primary is a one-form entry school with a nursery in the parish of South Hackney. 87.6% of pupils are of minority ethnic backgrounds, the three main groups being Black African, Black Caribbean and White. A quarter of pupils speak 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 above the national average. The headteacher has been in post at the school for the past 11 years. The school was judged to be good by Ofsted on 20th September 2016.

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

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 that is underpinned by Christian values
- Religious education (RE) is given a high priority within the curriculum and as a result pupils acquire a secure theological understanding of the Christian faith and of other religions.

Areas to improve

- To make the established set of Christian values more explicitly known by all of the community so that all stakeholders can be involved in promoting and reinforcing these values.
- Establish stronger systems to ensure that outcomes from self evaluation and review feed directly into strategic planning so that leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the priorities for the further development of this church school.
- Refine teaching in RE and evolve assessment practices in the light of national changes so that all pupils are challenged to the highest possible standards.

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

The school's strong Christian ethos makes a significant contribution in supporting the learning, progress, personal growth and wellbeing of all pupils. The leadership team place great importance upon nurturing and developing the whole child in order that they should develop fully in 'body, mind and soul'. As a result, pupils flourish and enjoy coming to this church school. This is reflected both in attendance figures which are above national, and in performance data. This shows that pupils attain above national expectations and make good progress from their starting points. Ofsted judged the school to be good earlier in the academic year.

The school has selected 14 Christian values which all have an important place in school life. Through a planned programme of collective worship, pupils are able to focus on each value in turn and learn how the values are rooted in biblical teaching. As a result, they are able to give examples of specific Bible stories which illustrate their school values. For example, one child explained how the parable of 'The Good Samaritan' was an illustration of how they had considered showing compassion towards refugees. When speaking about the school, both parents and children describe it as a 'family', emphasising how the Christian character of the school creates a culture where staff demonstrate a high level of care to everyone in the community. Parents comment that the school's values are particularly evident in the way that the children behave towards each other. Positive relationships are enjoyed by all members of the school community and children are taught to 'treat others as you would like to be treated'. Governors and school leaders have rightly recognized the need to review and reduce the number of distinctively Christian values in order to make them explicitly known to all members of the school community.

RE and collective worship both play a key role in the promotion of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. Pupils clearly value and respect the diversity of faiths around them, both in their school and wider community. They enjoy learning about special days and festivals celebrated by other faith groups represented within the school and this makes a valuable contribution to RE.

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 members of the clergy. Themes include links to the value of the week and the key Christian festivals. 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 in the number of charities the school supports. All members of the school community recognise that worship plays a significant role within the life of the school and parents comment on how much they benefit from attending special services. Class worship is well developed at the school but further consideration should be given as to how to create an atmosphere of collective worship as experienced in larger gatherings which is distinctively different from that of an RE lesson.

Prayer is a central part of school life and is naturally woven throughout the school day. Prayer and reflection effectively supports and contributes to the spiritual development of both staff and pupils. For example, regular occasions for both personal and collective prayer are given. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to write their own prayers and place them in the prayer boxes and prayer trees. They also enjoy using the reflective areas in the classroom as a place for stillness and quiet reflection and can talk about the positive impact of this when they are angry or upset.

The school is very well supported by the clergy from the local parish church, particularly the rector who is described by the children as being 'essential' to the life of the school. 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. The children speak warmly of the clergy led assembly stating that the clergy are 'generous with their time. They teach us how to be calm and peaceful in the world as we all live together on one planet'. Leaders informally evaluate and review collective worship, but this does not always feed directly into strategic planning.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious education has a high profile within the school and pupils clearly enjoy the subject. Standards of attainment are at least in line with national expectations and consistent with standards in other core subjects. Teaching in RE is good and sometimes better. 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. The Christian character of the school is clearly visible throughout the learning environment in classrooms and corridors

and is referenced frequently by the children. The curriculum has been carefully developed over the past year by the subject leader in order to ensure appropriate coverage and progression. Careful thought has been given in order to successfully implement the new diocesan syllabus. 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 strong contribution to 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.

Formative assessment procedures are in place and support teachers planning and differentiation. However, summative assessment systems require further development in order to ensure leaders have an overview of standards. RE is very well managed and led by a teacher who is passionate about the subject, establishing and implementing a clear action plan for the year. She is well supported by the headship team and rector, who also contribute to the monitoring process through learning walks, book scrutiny and regular meetings with the RE leader. The impact of monitoring is evident in improvements to the quality of work in pupils' books. Reports on changes to RE have been presented to Governors and as a result governors are well equipped to monitor progress and measure the impact on pupil enjoyment and achievement.

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 community, regardless of any personal belief. The headteacher has ensured that the school vision, 'that each child is provided with a wide range of opportunities to develop in body, mind and spirit' is underpinned by the outworking of the school's Christian values, creating a nurturing and supportive learning environment in which pupils and adults flourish. School leaders have plans in place to further strengthen the school community's knowledge and understanding of the values by sharing them with even greater understanding and clarity. Senior leaders have a sound understanding of all aspects of the school, ensuring high standards of achievement and well-being are maintained. They have provided wide-ranging and meaningful global links for the children through a shared RE project with a school in Spain which is enhancing their understanding of beliefs and practices in different Christian communities

Governors regularly visit the school and are involved in aspects of self-evaluation. They have an accurate view of the schools strengths and develop clear plans for areas that require strengthening. They scrutinize and monitor the school development plan and recognise that the focus on the school as a church school would benefit from being more sharply defined within this plan. The headteacher places importance on equipping leaders to work successfully in a church school. Consequently the RE leader has accessed relevant training and support from the diocese. The statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met and together they make a positive contribution to pupils' SMSC development.

Parents speak warmly of the school and the care and relationships that have been fostered through the Christian ethos. Strong and effective partnerships are enjoyed between the school and the parish churches of St John of Jerusalem. The support provided by the clergy makes a significant contribution to the Christian character within the school.

SIAMS report May 2017, St John of Jerusalem CE VA Primary School, Kingshold Road, London, E9 7JF