

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Christ Church CE School	
Redhill Street, London, NW1 4BD	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	London
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Camden
Name of multi-academy trust / federation	n/a
Date/s of inspection	3 February 2017
Date of last inspection	28 February 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	101927
Headteacher	Paula Aitcheson-Walker
Inspector's name and number	Roz Kimani (NS 838)

School context

Christ Church is a one-form primary school with a nursery. The school has a significantly high deprivation indicator. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above national average. The percentage of Pupil Premium children is high. The number of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities is below national averages. However, the proportion of children with an Educational Health Care Plan is twice the national average. A significantly high number of pupils come from minority ethnic groups, mainly Black African and Bangladeshi, and the number of pupils with English as an additional language is above national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Christ Church as a Church of England school is good

- The strong focus on the pastoral care of the children is reflected in the nurturing environment, which provides supports for children in all circumstances.
- Collective worship is a strength of the school, giving opportunities for children to reflect and develop an understanding of personal spirituality.
- The passion and drive of headteacher and leadership team to support the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all learners contribute to a strong community.
- The centrality of prayer, along with opportunities for reflection contributes well to the spiritual development of the whole school community.

Areas to improve

- To review the Christian values within the school, ensuring that all members have a shared understanding of what makes them distinctively Christian.
- To strengthen the school's approach to self-evaluating the effectiveness and distinctiveness of the school as a church school
- To sharpen procedures and more rigorously track assessment in Religious Education to lead to clearer understanding of pupil progress and attainment.

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

The school's mission statement 'The Christian faith is at the heart of our school community. At Christ Church we care for each other and learn together' is made clear in the way the leadership team, governors and parents discuss the vision for the school. The Christian ethos underpins school life and creates a very supportive atmosphere where children feel safe and very well cared for. Children are happy to come to school and they enjoy lessons. This is reflected in the attendance figures. As a result children make good progress from low starting points and achieve expected national averages at the end of KS2. RE lessons provide an opportunity for children to explore similarities and differences between the many different faiths in the school.

The headteacher is passionate about supporting children and families in the school and living out the Christian faith. The governors are clear that the headteacher 'steers the school through Christianity'. Parents and children talk about the respect that members of the school community have for the faith of each child, whether Christian or of another faith. Children are respectful of each other's beliefs and talk about sharing of their own faith with confidence. The school is a Rights Respecting school. Children are able to articulate values of the school including perseverance and faith. However, not all members of the school community can explain what makes these values distinctively Christian.

Parents talk about the school as a 'family', which is reflected in discussions with the headteacher and the leadership of the school. Children understand the importance of religious education and speak enthusiastically about learning about the Bible and visiting various places of worship. Pupils' behaviour is extremely good; they are courteous to adults and to one another. The school offers the children different opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the Jesus and Me (JAM) clubs for children from Reception to Year 6 make a good contribution to this. The Place2Be offers families and children a counselling service to support the many needs of the school community. Parents commented that Christ Church is 'a school that wants the children to thrive'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is carefully planned to ensure that there is a good coverage of biblical teaching as well as the liturgical calendar. The children really enjoy collective worship, which has been enhanced by the support of Crossteach, a Christian trust that delivers exciting and interactive worship and encourages children to explore the Christian faith. Children can describe their understanding of the concept of the Trinity because it has been taught to them during religious education (RE) in a way that is meaningful to them. The planning of collective worship involves the headteacher, RE lead and clergy to ensure a good range of experiences for the children. Children are reflective during collective worship. During the example observed, the children had a range of opportunities to encourage their engagement including music, drama and prayer. Children understand the importance of prayer and really enjoy the 'teaspoon' prayer at the end of the day (Thank you, Sorry, Please) saying 'I like the teaspoon prayer, as it calms our day down'.

During the collective worship, a candle is lit to signify the start of prayer. Where the children knew Makaton, they joined in signing to recite the school prayer. A number of people lead worship regularly including staff members, visitors and Crossteach. This ensures that pupils experience a range of Christian traditions. Children and their families value the special times in the year when worship is held in the parish church or services are held in the school. Families of all faiths feel very welcome. Governors and senior leaders attend worship to ensure that it has a positive impact on pupils and provides them with opportunities for their spiritual development. The school has recently had significant change in the guidance from the church due to illness. Despite this, the school continues to support the children who wish to be confirmed by offering small group support for the children with the clergy during school time.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

RE has a high profile in the school and is led by senior teachers.. The leadership of RE is currently in transition due to the maternity leave of the deputy headteacher. The new RE lead has worked with the deputy head to ensure continuity and a smooth transition. This transition has included joint learning walks, lesson observations, work scrutiny and training for the new subject leader at the diocese. The enthusiastic leadership of RE ensures that planning is shared, the subject is well resourced and expectations are high.

Leaders have high expectations of learners and the school has a system for measuring progress and attainment of children in RE. Some confusion over the assessment system has led to some inaccuracies in attainment review and as a consequence the school was not able to share standards in RE in a clear and succinct way. However, standards in RE books are generally in line with national expectations with some work of a higher standard. Work set broadly reflects starting points and is as good as seen in subjects. Clearer mapping of attainment will enable leaders to accurately analyse strengths and map progress of all learners.

The teaching over time is good. Staff comment that opportunities for Godly Play and other activities ensure that all children can 'shine in RE'. Teachers are well supported and staff training results in developing confidence in teaching RE and providing suitable resources, which make lessons hands-on and fun for the children. Teachers plan interesting lessons that engage pupils through a variety of activities such as art and drama, as well as discussion. The school is currently using a scheme of work based on a two-year cycle and are implementing the new diocesan syllabus in stages. This allows for clear, systematic teaching of Christianity and other major world religions. Children enjoy RE and mention Godly Play in particular as a time to reflect upon their own understanding. Children are involved in self-assessment at the end of each term, which encourages them to be reflective learners. Parents share that 'children enjoy learning about other faiths and learning from each other'.

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

The headteacher and school leaders promote a Christian vision for the school that places faith at the heart of the school community. It is evident that all members of the school community 'care for each other and work together' and this permeates through every aspect of school life. Support from the governing body in the development of the day-to-day Christian character and ethos of the school has been particularly successful. One such example was evident when, during an interregnum at the church, a number of governors who are part of the clergy team, supported the school by leading collective worship.

Although there is a clear self evaluation process in place, the school would benefit from leaders adopting a more systematic approach to considering the effectiveness and distinctiveness of the school as a church school. Identified strengths and areas to improve could then more clearly feed into school improvement planning.

The school places a high value on partnerships, both in the local and the wider community. The school values links with the diocese through work with the local advisor and in attending training for subject leaders, especially during this time of transition for the RE leader. Despite challenges with the church building and changes in the clergy, the school has ensured that links are still strong. This has resulted in the children understanding the importance of the church as part of their school. Governors are very involved in school life, they understand its future leadership needs and plan accordingly to ensure continuity and stability. Parents feel the school teaches their children to value everyone's differences and celebrate and share each other's faiths. Parents feel very much part of the school saying 'the school cares for the family not just the child'. Parents are supportive of the school and are encouraged by the way in which faith is shared and respected. The children value being part of a global community. They proudly talk about fund raising for toilets for other children across the world and this contributes to their growing knowledge of Christianity as a world-wide faith.

Arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements.

SIAMS report February 2017 Christ Church CE School Redhill Street, London, NW1 4BD