

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

The Green, Totteridge, London N20 8NX

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	St Albans
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Barnet
Name of multi-academy trust / federation	n/a
Date/s of inspection	10 November 2016
Date of last inspection	22 November 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 101327
Headteacher	Jo Devine
Inspector's name and number	Shirley Whales 830

School context

St Andrew's Church of England Primary School is a single form entry primary school, which serves the local areas of Whetstone and Barnet. Currently there are 208 pupils on role, many from minority ethnic backgrounds and some with English as an additional language. The school enjoys links with the local parish of Totteridge. The headteacher has been in post two years.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Andrew's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The headteacher provides strong Christian leadership. She ensures that the school's Christian character at the heart of St Andrew's makes a positive difference to the pupils' academic achievement, spiritual development and well-being.
- The school's Christian ethos encourages all pupils to develop as unique individuals and provides opportunities for them to explore their matters of faith and belief openly.
- An explicit set of core Christian values, rooted in Christian teaching, is central to the life of the whole school community.
- Close attention is paid to monitoring, evaluation and school improvement planning so that it is distinctively Christian and all members of the school community engage with it.

Areas to improve

- Expand and develop pupils' awareness of Christianity as a worldwide faith with a wide range of worship styles to deepen their understanding.
- Improve the consistency in the quality of teaching for religious education (RE) to improve the outcomes and progress for all pupils.

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

The Christian character at the heart of St Andrew's is clearly articulated and makes a significant impact on the academic achievement and personal development of all pupils. The school's core Christian values of love, respect and responsibility are fully demonstrated by all members of the school community, who speak passionately about the positive influence of the values on behaviour and relationships in school. One parent explained how the pupils are 'incentivised to use the values, recognised for being responsible citizens and praised for showing respect to others'. Pupils are able to link their understanding of values to not only life skills but also to excerpts from the Bible. In the Reception class pupils learn about courage through the story of Daniel in the Lion's Den and in Key Stage Two pupils write postcards to God, pleading for forgiveness, with a link to Jonah and the Whale.

The distinctively Christian character of St. Andrew's School makes it a highly cohesive and inclusive community in which all feel valued regardless of their ability, faith or ethnicity. Pupils demonstrate an understanding of a wide selection of values; they know that the world has great diversity and that this should be respected. This in turn, impacts on the positive ways that they treat each other in the school community.

School leaders have recently raised the profile to address any issues regarding attendance. They encourage responsibility and give support for struggling families from a learning mentor.

Opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) education are exemplified effectively through religious education (RE), music, art and drama. School leaders have worked hard to provide opportunities for pupils to reflect spiritually and improvements in the environment and class reflection areas have enabled this to happen. As a consequence, pupils have a clear understanding of their place in God's world, recognising their responsibilities to support and care for each other and others who are less fortunate. The pupils enjoy a voice through the school parliament, worship groups and post-it note opportunities across the school and as a result they feel valued, involved and included. Pupils live out the Christian values of respect and responsibility for one another and others beyond the school through the democratic processes and debates exemplified in the school parliament. 'Why should children the same age as us live a life of misery? We raise money so that the world can be a fairer place.' Pupils have a strong sense of social injustice and they are ardent activists. This practice is evidence of their social and moral development.

Whilst there are strong links with the local church, pupils' knowledge of other community Christian churches is less secure. Pupils are made aware that Christianity is a worldwide faith although this aspect is not fully developed. School leaders have already planned to extend learning in these areas.

RE strongly supports the Christian character of the school. It provides an excellent understanding of Christianity alongside a rich experience of the multi-cultural and multi-faith world and a respect for diversity and difference. As a result of rigorous monitoring, school leaders have rightly identified the need to make the quality of teaching in RE consistent across the school so that all pupils have the same access to the high quality learning that is evidenced in most classes.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship enjoys a special place in the school, where the Anglican traditions and practices are shared and services are seen as important and valued features of daily life. Pupils enjoy the range of worship experiences such as drama, singing and signing. Whilst liturgical links are not fully embedded, there is a clear focus on the school's values and links to some Bible stories and festivals within the Church year.

Pupils enjoy worship as an opportunity to 'be together as a school family'. They respond appropriately and sing beautifully, engaging in prayer and reflection with reverence and respect. Pupils are asked to think about the needs of others and to share their ideas with worship leaders.

Prayer features importantly in the life of the school. Pupils describe how their private prayers are 'blessed in church, where God will hear them' and their prayers to share are used in worship. One pupil explained how prayer provides 'tranquil moments that bring us closer to God'. Reflection spaces in classrooms are well established and regularly used and displays around school link explicitly to the Christian values.

Wednesday worship is class based and focuses on the core values. Pupils express these values in their 'values books'. On other occasions the school worship group and different classes get the opportunity to plan and lead worship. These acts of worship are not recorded in detail on the worship plan but they are nevertheless enjoyed by the pupils who particularly appreciate the interactive nature of worship. Pupils are beginning to understand the theological aspects of worship and can explain the Trinitarian understanding of God, 'It's Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

God all in one person'. They have an excellent knowledge of Bible stories and of the life and person of Jesus. They speak knowledgeably about the symbolism in worship and they are offered a rich, spiritual experience of Christian faith and practice.

Evaluations of worship are collected from governors, members of staff and pupils. These are shared and used to inform planning. From evaluations collected so far, school leaders are mindful of the need to involve representatives from different Christian traditions. They have also recognised the importance of adding detail to worship plans, especially liturgical links, so that all are aware of the themes and how they link with the school's Christian values.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Pupils clearly enjoy the creative nature of RE in their school where the subject is given a high profile within the curriculum. Some pupils are able to describe their favourite experiences of RE with clarity and a significant degree of understanding. One pupil compared the Hindu story of Rama and Sita, 'Everyone placed a light in their windows and doorways to show the light of truth and goodness' with Jesus who is seen as 'light of the world'. Pupils' understanding and knowledge of their own faith is shared with other pupils who show appreciation and respect because the information is coming from their peers. This is the type of activity which makes this school such a rich learning environment.

Pupils display a secure knowledge of the key aspects of Christianity. They give their opinions and information quite naturally and with confidence, 'I don't think God is war-like because he created humans, He did not create weapons.' Wherever possible, links are made with Christian values, SMSC and the Church year. Pupils are sometimes challenged by 'big questions' and they develop a range of skills to evaluate their learning.

Attainment in RE is measured by how much progress pupils make across a unit of work. Progress measures are linked to the learning objectives in each topic. Most pupils make good progress but the quality of teaching, particularly questioning and the quality of book work, is inconsistent across the school. In some inspiring lessons, teachers use an impressive range of artefacts and visual resources to support learning. Effective questioning in these lessons challenges pupils to think deeply and they record facts and opinions with some degree of accuracy.

Members of staff benefit from a range of professional activities, some led by the diocese and some directed by the subject leader. Monitoring procedures are in place and school leaders have identified the strengths and weaknesses and are focusing on further refinements to assessments and raising standards across the school.

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

The headteacher, clergy and governors provide insightful leadership and management of St Andrew's as a church school. Together they promote a values-based Christian vision that is central to the belief and practice of the school. Through nurturing pupils' spiritual health and endorsing the values of love, respect and responsibility, school leaders are accomplished at meeting the needs of individual pupils. They have developed effective self-evaluation processes that place the uniqueness of each pupil at the heart of school improvement. They recognise and understand the importance of the school's Christian values on pupils. All rightly believe that this impacts on pupils' high academic achievement, good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. A rich and creative curriculum is supported by these Christian values, which permeate the school 'like a stick of rock'. This school, for some pupils, regardless of their faith or background, is seen as their 'second home', where they feel safe and cared for. Parents praise school leadership, 'This is a very personal, caring environment. Each child is valued. It comes from the top.'

Leadership overall is strong because of the relationship between church and school which is valued and visible to the local community. They are aware of the need to sharpen the focus on 'broadening the experience' with a wider range of visits and visitors. They recognise the importance of strengthening pupils' understanding of Christianity across the world and are already taking appropriate actions.

Monitoring systems are effectively embedded and as a result strategic planning is purposeful and instrumental in moving the school forward. Governors have a strong commitment to the school's Christian foundation. The leadership of the school ensures that the school's Christian values and ethos are at the forefront of all new initiatives. It also ensures that appropriate support, encouragement and challenge are given to the RE and worship leader. As a consequence, RE and worship meet statutory requirements. Governor visits focus on school priorities and systematic reviews of the school's work including its Christian distinctiveness demonstrate the passionate striving for constant improvement. Focus areas from the last inspection have been met.