

The Methodist Church

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St. Mary's CE Primary School

Rectory Gardens
Hornsey
London N8 7QN

Previous SIAMS grade: n/a

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: London

Local authority: Haringey

Dates of inspection: 19 May 2016

Date of last inspection: 13 December 2011 (infant school), 8 March 2012 (junior school)

School's unique reference number: 102139

Headteacher: Fran Hargrove

Inspector's name and number: John Logan Quality Assurance Assessor: Jo Fageant 104

School context

St Mary's is a growing school in the middle of a significant period of expansion. Formed from the amalgamation of the Infant and Junior schools in 2013, the school is in the process of expanding to 3 forms of entry and undergoing a major rebuilding programme. The school serves a diverse community with varying socio economic backgrounds and with children of many different cultural and faith backgrounds. They are linked to Hornsey Parish church, where the clergy team plays an integral role in the life of the school. The Ofsted report of 2014 graded the school as 'good'.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Mary's as a Church of England school are good

- The Christian ethos of the school is strong and complements the emphasis on values, rights and responsibilities by informing their work and direction.
- The Christian distinctiveness of the school is exemplified through the strong focus on each child as an individual and has led to all pupils' needs being met within a caring and nurturing environment.
- Links with the church are strong and this supports the spiritual development of the whole school community effectively.
- As a result of the Christian ethos, relationships are positive and strong. Members of the school feel valued and part of the school family. Consequently spiritual, social, social and cultural (SMSC) development is a strength of the school.

Areas to improve

- Develop vision and practice to ensure that the school's Christian distinctiveness is embedded and consistently explicit in all areas of the school's life.

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

The emphasis on values, rights and responsibilities is core to the success of the school and is well embedded. Specifically Christian values are clearly expressed, but what makes them distinctively Christian is not yet fully articulated and communicated throughout the school community. The inclusive Christian character is clearly evidenced by parental descriptions of the school as a 'welcoming

school' and this has a significant impact on attendance. Relationships at the school are of a high quality and there is a strong sense that all children are valued and treated equally. One member of staff talked about this being 'the golden thread throughout the school', but few are able to attribute this link specifically to Christian distinctiveness. Parents speak of the school as responsive to their concerns. One parent spoke passionately about how well their child had settled in after a difficult time at their previous school. Using one site for a combination of Foundation Stage and Year 1 pupils creates an environment specific to the needs of the youngest children enabling them to settle well into school routines. There is a strong emphasis on academic achievement or all through effective differentiation, particularly for children with special educational needs. As one parent explained 'children grow academically and spiritually here' and one child expressed this, 'each child is treated the same, but in different ways'. Bible stories underpin an ethos of inclusiveness which influences academic achievement. Behaviour is good overall and this is due to the Christian character and strong values of the school. The significant involvement of the clergy team in the school provides a rich resource for developing a positive experience of spirituality. Provision for moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Children learn how individual and collective responsibilities for each other's traditions build a strong community. This was exemplified by one child who described how being a Muslim in a church school has helped him understand that 'everyone is equal and we can take advice from different people and their faiths'. The extensive use of visits and visitors to the school develops children's ability to respect one another. This emphasis on inclusiveness and welcoming of all within the context of a church school is enhanced through Religious Education (RE) where children particularly enjoy learning about other faiths and more specifically their visits to different places of worship. One child summed up the impact of this, 'our diversity helps us to know more about the outside world'. Pupils have developed some understanding of Christianity as a world religion through parents from other parts of the world sharing personal examples, such as Christmas traditions from their own family experiences. They have an understanding about the importance of RE on their lives and are able to apply values from Bible stories to their own experiences. An example of this was a Year 1 pupil reflecting on the values behind the story of Joseph who said, 'I get jealous when my brother gets things I don't'. The school council is active in living out the school's Christian values through a large number of charity and fundraising activities. This all reinforces the school priority to develop a church school which is 'at the heart of the community'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship experiences are varied in content and are given high priority in the school. They provide opportunities for prayer, singing, contemplation and reflection that are distinctively Christian and support the Anglican tradition of the school. However, the overall organisation of worship, along with the monitoring and evaluation of its impact, lacks coherence and structure. Worship led by clergy is of a particularly high quality and enables learners to make good responses. For example, following a guided meditation on the Pentecost narrative, pupils responded: 'I felt like I was really there', 'I was fizzing with the fire'. Worship uses a variety of forms of prayer, with children using their own prayers from the 'prayer tree' as well as Anglican liturgy and the school prayer. Children are able to speak about how they feel prayer helps them to be 'more peaceful' and how it impacts on their daily lives, as one child put it, 'it makes me think about how prayers could bring about a change of mind'. Other acts of worship are led by staff and sometimes involve pupils and children. They talk freely about how these acts of worship help them to reflect on their rights and responsibilities. Throughout the year the school holds a number of special acts of worship, including those that commemorate the main Christian festivals and the 'Big 6' Eucharist, which is organised and produced by Year 6 pupils and clergy. All groups speak of the enjoyment and uplift they receive from the Christmas and summer celebrations at 'The Tower' and their Easter celebration with 'Clover the donkey'. Pupil involvement in planning and leading worship outside Year 6 does take place, but is not yet fully embedded and strategies are not in place to measure its impact. Worship experiences mainly draw their source from the Bible, with stories mostly coming from the Old Testament, the life of Jesus and the church tradition. Children can name and talk about a number of key stories from the Bible and are able to apply many of the themes to their own situation. Children are aware of the concept of the Trinity and are able to explain their thoughts in a coherent way and with some degree of understanding. Worship

themes help children develop spiritually and morally which frequently result in service to others, such as the many fund raising and community activities the school undertakes.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Standards in RE are broadly in line with age related national expectations and sometimes higher. This is due to mostly good teaching across the school supported by the RE leader. The RE subject leader is effective in supporting teachers, monitoring provision and evaluating outcomes. This has a clear impact on coherence and the quality of RE and pupil progress. She takes part in diocesan training and is working well at identifying future plans for the RE curriculum. Regular assessment of RE outcomes is generally effective in helping children make progress. Pupils make good progress, given their starting points, and this is reflected in good quality marking and pupil response in most work. A small proportion of marking fails to correct important misconceptions and shows some gaps in teacher subject knowledge. A wide range of visits to the church and other places of worship ensures that engagement and enjoyment of RE is high. RE enhances children's SMSC development, through the breadth of the RE curriculum and what they learn about Christianity and other religions. Pupils learn stories from the Bible and are encouraged to evaluate and reflect on them. Year 2 children, exploring the feeding of the 5000, were encouraged to record their feelings on a 'thinking board' and in Year 6 pupils were skilfully encouraged to consider the nature of miracles. One child responded by saying 'I don't know how it happened but it did' and children were able to talk about how it was important to make sure everyone has enough food. Throughout the school a variety of active learning strategies are used to help make the teaching engaging. In Year R pupils were asked to reflect on Joseph's dreams by considering their own dreams and aspirations. Some children talked about their own dreams. In Year 1 a child related to the story of the Good Samaritan with the response 'Me and mummy saw a man that was ill and we called an ambulance'. Questioning in lessons tends to be reflective and responsive, but at times lacks challenge and depth.

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

The school has been, and continues to be, on a significant journey in its development as a church school. Leaders including governors, the headteacher, the leadership team and the RE subject leader have a clear vision of how the school is progressing, particularly with its strong culture of values and its strong ethos statement. This is well articulated and shared amongst all of the school community. However, the link between the ethos statement and Christian distinctiveness is not yet fully articulated and embedded. Parents, pupils and others speak of a really inclusive school which draws on the opportunities and strengths of being a church school. For example, all groups speak highly of the significant involvement of the clergy team. They provide strong direction and support for the school in developing their Christian distinctiveness in many different ways, including chaplaincy support to the staff, regular meetings with the RE subject leader and lunchtime 'messy church' clubs for the children. Members of the governing body are fully involved in the life of the school and support the headteacher and leadership team in school improvement. As a result of strong self-evaluation by leaders, plans for improvement ensure that the development of the Christian character of the school is effective and has a high profile. Parents speak highly of the school as a church school, particularly the involvement of lay and ordained staff. One parent said that although they do not attend church themselves they felt that children were getting a very positive experience of Christianity from the school. They are welcomed into the school and are involved in many different aspects of school life. Leaders have good and supportive links with other local schools, including church schools and the diocese. This has enabled the development of some positive networks the result of which has been an improvement in achievement and distinctiveness. This has also provided effective opportunities for training and development for leadership roles in church schools. Although overall leadership of worship lacks clarity, the support from senior leaders for this and RE is strong and enables good and improving practice to be developed in both areas.