

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Sir John Cass Foundation and Redcoat Church of England Secondary School

Stepney Way, Stepney, London, E1 0RH	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	London
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Dates of inspection	22-23 May 2018
Date of last inspection	June 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided - 100977
Headteacher	Paul Woods
Inspector's name and number	Pamela Draycott (161)

School context

This is an above average size, popular and inclusive secondary school with a large sixth form. Reflecting its locality, almost 90 percent of its students are from Muslim family faith backgrounds. A range of ethnic backgrounds is represented, the largest groups being Bangladeshi, Black African and Black Caribbean. The percentage who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average. Similarly, the percentage for whom the school receives extra funding, due to social or economic disadvantage, is high. The percentage with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) is above the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Sir John Cass Foundation and Redcoat Secondary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The school's Christian and inclusive service to its community is excellently expressed through 'the Cass Way' which successfully sustains and drives forward developments as a church school.
- Based on its Christian vision, students flourish academically and personally as they 'Learn together, Pray together and Achieve together'.
- There is a strong sense of belonging and community based on mutual respect and on the valuing of the individual, created by God.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development opportunities are given a high priority through the curriculum and through extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities. Students respond very positively to such opportunities.

Areas to improve

- In keeping with recent structural changes to staffing organisation, embed the role and accountability of middle leaders so that this tier of management consistently and effectively supports and promotes 'the Cass Way'.

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

The school's inclusive Christian ethos is deeply engrained and strongly motivating, guiding its service to students and their families. This is very well expressed through a firm focus on academic attainment and progress and equally on personal development and wellbeing. It is excellently exemplified through 'the Cass Way'. Unambiguously based on the teaching of Jesus, 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you', it clearly supports the exemplary

behaviour and strong relationships in evidence. 'The Cass Way' was developed recently, with students taking a strong lead. It makes more explicit, consolidates and extends the school's longstanding Christian underpinning. Consequently, it is already well embedded across school life. It is summarised as, 'We learn together, We pray together, We achieve together'. This is seen, for example, in the calm and purposeful learning environment and in the respect shown towards each other, irrespective of economic, ethnic or religious background. Likewise, 'the Cass Way' impacts positively on academic standards. A higher than average percentage of students enter the school with attainment that is below the expected. Through their time in school students make at least good and often better progress from their various starting points. This means that attainment at GCSE and A level is above the national average. As a clear expression of its Christian care there are strong pastoral systems in place, along with clear academic monitoring which focuses teaching and learning very well. The Christian and inclusive ethos leads to students feeling happy and safe in school. This is expressed through high attendance levels and in very low levels of exclusion, both internal and external. SMSC development opportunities are wide-ranging within the curriculum, through the worship programme, and through an extensive extra-curricular programme, which includes periodic residential opportunities. Students respond very positively to these opportunities and are developing as open, reflective, responsible and considerate young people. The collective worship programme deeply supports the school's Christian foundation. Likewise, religious education (RE) makes an effective contribution to the school's ethos, supporting students' deep understanding and appreciation of difference and diversity very well.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The importance of the daily collective worship programme is rightly recognised as contributing to students' and adults' personal development. It expresses and enhances the school's explicitly Christian and inclusive ethos very well. It is based around a shared time of reflection and prayer during the morning tutor period, alongside key stage and year group assemblies. Praying together, is a well expressed part of 'the Cass Way' and is consequently a central part of school life. A number of students volunteer to lead the morning prayer. However, their more formal role in planning and leading worship is less evident. Collective worship opportunities include regular references to biblical teaching and to Christian practices. This means that students develop a good understanding of the importance of the Bible and the significance of Jesus for Christians. Beliefs about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, forgiveness, sin and judgement are also explored. Such concepts are expanded further through appropriate links with the RE curriculum. The rhythm of the Christian year is reflected through the programme so that students have opportunity to consider the importance of, for example, Christmas and Easter for Christians. The commonality of belief and practices between Christianity and other faiths, particularly Islam, is appropriately and deeply emphasised. This means that students and staff display mutual respect and consideration of others through collective worship. The programme is well planned and extended through, for example, the annual Founder's Day and carol services. Worship is extended through the provision of a Eucharist and Jumma prayers at lunchtime on Fridays. Through these opportunities the significance of prayer and worship to individuals and groups is very well expressed. It reflects the school's Christian inclusiveness and service to its community very well. Students and staff engage in worship thoughtfully and respectfully. There is a small, well-appointed multi-faith prayer room which is well used. Worship also often brings about social action by encouraging students as they raise money for various charities. Students, staff, the chaplains and governors have a clear understanding of the impact of worship through regular monitoring and evaluation. This leads to continued renewal and effective development over time.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE has a very high profile across the school with its importance as an expression of the school's Christian underpinning rightly celebrated. The standard of attainment is high and consistently above national averages at GCSE and A level. Careful monitoring of different groups of pupils supports them in making at least good, if not better progress. The department draws appropriately on whole school priorities and developments. For example, the school has identified that some higher ability boys, whilst attaining well, do not always make sufficient progress. In keeping with subsequent whole school strategies for improvement, the department focuses well on these students and to very good effect. The department has a group of specialist RE teachers who are at various stages of their career. They work very well together and are mutually supportive. This contributes effectively to strong teaching where learning is well structured. Periodic involvement in subject specific training takes place, most recently linked to GCSE and A level curriculum changes. Full use is not consistently made of other RE support groups and networks locally or within the Diocese. A range of strategies are very well used to focus students' learning and the GCSE and A level courses are very effectively linked to examination criteria. Students of all ages engage constructively with their teacher and with each other. There is a positive learning environment. Students are respectful of others' views and share ideas and beliefs in a mutually respectful way. They value RE seeing its relevance to everyday life. Many are inspired by the subject, finding it both interesting and appropriately challenging. The curriculum is periodically extended through visits to a variety of places of worship but this is not consistently the case. Teacher marking and

assessment is now more focused, due to a whole-school development priority and to changes in examination criteria. It provides clear opportunities for students to reflect on and improve their work. Across the curriculum there is a good balance between content that focuses on Christianity and that which addresses other world faiths, alongside ethical, moral and philosophical issues. Effective teaching focusing on Christianity leads to a good and deepening understanding of Christian beliefs and practices, alongside those of other faiths, especially Islam.

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

The headteacher has been in post since September 2016. He has a clear vision for an inclusive Christian school serving its local community. This is strongly shared by his senior leadership team, other staff, governors and parents. Drawing on its longstanding Christian ethos he has successfully facilitated the refreshment of the school's Christian vision. This is now encapsulated in 'the Cass Way'. This vision is explicitly informing whole school curriculum decisions and staff development and accountability. Structural changes to staffing roles, expectations and accountability have been recently introduced to ensure that the school's Christian ethos continues to enable all to flourish. These changes, particularly at middle leadership level, have not yet been thoroughly embedded. The professional development of staff working within the church school sector is taken seriously. There is a longstanding record of 'growing its own' with a good number of staff being trained or starting at the school in the early stages of their career. Many of these are now in middle or senior leadership roles. Others have gone on to subject leadership or senior leadership roles in other schools. Senior leaders and governors know the school well. This means that self-evaluation is accurate and there is a clear action plan for continued development. Despite current vacancies on the governing body, existing governors are working together appropriately to provide good support and challenge to senior leaders. They know the school well and are strongly supportive of its inclusive and Christian distinctiveness. The chaplaincy team has a central role in supporting and leading the school's ongoing religious and spiritual life. Arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements and both areas are well led. Under the leadership of the current headteacher the school is becoming more open and outward looking. The relationship with the local authority has expanded with, for example, staff now attending local subject network meetings. Links with the Diocese of London are good overall with the school drawing appropriately on the expertise provided through termly link visits, for example. The school does not however, consistently access the RE support that is available through the Diocese. Parents are well informed about their children's education. They rightly recognise and strongly support its inclusive Christian foundation, irrespective of their particular religious background. Since the previous denominational inspection key strengths have been sustained.

SIAMS report [May 2018] Sir John Cass Foundation and Redcoat Secondary School, Stepney, London, E1 0RH