

# Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

| Christ Church School |  |                  |                 |
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| Address              | Christ Church School, Christ Church Hill, Hampstead, NW3 1JH |                  |                 |
| Date of inspection   | 14 November 2019   | Status of school | Voluntary Aided |
| Diocese              | London   | URN              | 100028          |

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| <b>Overall Judgement</b>     | How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish? | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Excellent</b> |
| <b>Additional Judgements</b> | <b>The impact of collective worship</b>  | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Excellent</b> |
|                              | <b>The effectiveness of religious education (RE)</b>   | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Excellent</b> |

## School context

Christ Church is a primary school with 190 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British or other White heritage. Many pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages. The school holds several quality mark awards. There have been no major changes since the school's last SIAMS inspection.

## The school's Christian vision

A village school in London inspiring *life in all its fullness*. (rooted in John 10:10)

At Christ Church we believe every child and adult in our school should be able both to experience life in all its fullness now and aspire to life in all its fullness in the future.

## Key findings

- The school's vision is evident throughout the curriculum but especially through the many extra-curricular opportunities offered to all pupils.
- Inspirational leadership at all levels sets a tone of openness, honesty and support for up and coming teachers and early leaders enabling them to flourish
- Children are passionate about the school's vision – their eyes light up when talking about the 'rightness' of 'life in all its fullness'.
- Behaviour and the environment for learning are excellent. Key policies, routines and positive relationships all feed into an atmosphere where learning is key and there is no appetite for disruption.
- Religious education (RE) and collective worship are both extremely well led and play a central role in the life of the school.

## Areas for development

- Develop more opportunities for prayer, including spontaneous prayer, throughout the school day.
- Develop and refine systems to ensure that what is precious and central to the school as it is now, is sustained well into the future.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

### Inspection findings

Christ Church school serves a small, geographical area but has a well-understood and far reaching vision. This vision for every pupil and every adult to be able to 'live life in all its fullness, now and in the future' is absolutely central to every aspect of school life.

Passionate and inspirational leadership ensures that the vision is lived out strategically and operationally. This benefits not only the wider school family but the many trainee teachers that are beginning their careers in church schools. Mutually supportive partnerships with the diocese mean that other church schools benefit from the excellent practice at Christ Church, particularly in the teaching of RE. The school's staff and leaders, including governors, are very well supported through diocesan training. The partnership with the parish church is particularly strong. The school benefits from the extra space available in the church building. Every term, three joint Sunday services provide an added experience of worship for families, including experience of the Eucharist. Staff feel proud to be part of the school family; they cherish the values and ethos and know that their wellbeing and that of the pupils is a priority. Quality induction and professional development support all staff, enabling some to aspire to become Church school leaders. School governors regularly and effectively monitor how the vision is being developed and have ensured that development points from the last inspection have been addressed.

Pupils experience a wide ranging and ambitious curriculum during their time at Christ Church. They are highly articulate and very enthusiastic about their learning and speak of perseverance, being resilient and how it is ok to make mistakes. They talk of the school as being a place where everyone, pupils and adults alike, take responsibility for each other and everybody is welcome. It is clear that the school is a safe place to learn and there is no appetite for disruption. These attitudes, together with high quality teaching, mean that attainment and progress for all pupils, including vulnerable groups is very often above national averages. Attendance is good and exclusions almost non-existent.

Of particular note, is the, truly outstanding, non-compulsory wider curriculum, designed to promote interest in the arts, sports, hobbies and culture. Through whole school events such as 'The Happiness Project', pupils are empowered to look after their own well-being and mental health. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the importance of staying mentally healthy and describe a range of strategies that they can use. Leaders and governors work relentlessly to improve the school. As a result, they have been awarded several prestigious awards and quality marks. Notably, the focus of these awards is not just about academia but about personal fulfilment and spiritual growth, indeed, living life in all its fullness.

Through their experiences of welcoming trainees and visitors to the school such as, for example, a large group of Taiwanese students, pupils learn to look beyond themselves and celebrate difference and similarity alike. The desire for all to 'live life in all its fullness' results in many pupils taking the lead in supporting those less fortunate than themselves. Through choosing and supporting a range of charities and projects, pupils are developing as active advocates for change and champions for justice.

Parents are extremely positive and supportive of the school, its vision and values and how the ethos permeates throughout all areas of school life. One parent echoed the sentiments of many when he said, 'I don't know how they do it, but they just take them in and turn out... really good people!' Many parents say that they chose the school because of its 'family feel' and reputation as a welcoming and loving community. They appreciate being greeted by senior leaders and sometimes the vicar, at the start of the day. This means that many issues or concerns are dealt with promptly and with Christian compassion, very much in the spirit of enabling all to flourish. Several parents commented on the openness and transparency of the school's leaders. Others gave examples of how school staff, at all levels, go the 'extra mile' to support families in difficult circumstances.

Excellent leadership of RE and of collective worship mean that both areas make a significant contribution to pupil's superb spiritual and cultural development. Both give pupils the knowledge and skills needed to live well together and, when necessary, how to disagree well.

RE lessons are stimulating and reflect the Christian vision of the school exceptionally well. This is because RE has

a high profile and is led capably and enthusiastically by the deputy headteacher. He is actively involved in leading innovation with other church schools and his expertise results in high quality RE provision. Pupils have excellent opportunities to engage with a range of religions and worldviews. These opportunities include visiting different places of worship and receiving visitors. As a result, pupils demonstrate a keen interest in and deep respect for differing world views and faiths. A strong focus on developing religious literacy means that pupils have the tools to speak easily and think coherently about different faiths. Consequently, pupils speak with impressive confidence and maturity. Deeper thinking is developed through challenges to explain or to consider different beliefs, such as why people do what they do, and to ponder the big questions in life. Learning in RE is further enhanced through a highly positive relationship with the parish church. The building and the people are used as a great resource for learning in many subjects, including RE. Effective leadership ensures that staff receive well-focused and ongoing training.

Daily collective worship (assembly) is a joyful and central part of each school day. All participants understand and can articulate that 'life in all its fullness', for most people, includes a spiritual dimension. Pupils of various faiths speak of feeling completely comfortable to join in but not pressured to say things they may not believe. Pupils, staff and even parents speak enthusiastically about how messages from assembly stay with them and cause them to reflect at other points in the day. The very well-planned collective worship programme ensures that participants experience a variety of ways to encounter God, for example, music, prayer, liturgy, sharing, laughter, stillness and stories. Most opportunities for prayer, during the school day, take place in assembly or in church services. There is limited opportunity for spontaneous prayer in response to events. Through assemblies and RE lessons, pupils develop an excellent, age appropriate, understanding of Christian theology including the trinitarian nature of God and of the Eucharist.

The school's vision to enable all to 'live life in all its fullness' is evident in all aspects of school life. This school is well placed to continue to grow and develop as an exemplary Church of England school.



**The effectiveness of RE is Excellent**

The RE leader ensures that assessment is used robustly to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, regardless of starting points, all pupils make rapid and sustained progress. Every pupil is rightly proud of their work, which is creatively recorded and of a high standard. All groups of children, including the vulnerable, flourish academically in RE.

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| Headteacher                 | Katy Forsdyke    |
| Inspector's name and number | Jan Matthews 855 |