

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St George the Martyr Church of England Primary School			
Address	John's Mews, Camden, London, WC1N 2NX		
Date of inspection	20 November 2019	Status of school	Voluntary Aided
Diocese	London	URN	100040

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

School context

St George the Martyr is a one-form-entry primary school with 225 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of Bangladeshi heritage. Similar proportions are from Christian and Muslim faith communities. Most pupils speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages. Both the headteacher and deputy headteacher have joined the school since the previous denominational inspection. The new vicar of the local parish church was inducted earlier this year.

The school's Christian vision

Go, shine in the world and live as Jesus lived, with compassion, honesty and integrity. Rooted in Philippians, 2, verses 12-16.

Key findings

- Very effective leadership has ensured that notable strides have been taken in deepening the school's Christian character since the previous denominational inspection.
- The Christian vision is firmly rooted in the Christian narrative, well known and understood, and capable of challenging and encouraging everyone in the school community.
- In line with the vision, governors make a valued contribution to planning and supporting the school's Christian character, although their monitoring and evaluation is not sufficiently systematic and robust..
- Collective worship lies at the heart of the school, striking a successful balance between achieving inclusion and maintaining Christian distinctiveness.
- Pupils' have very positive attitudes to religious education (RE), they are enthusiastic learners and most make sound progress across the school. There is not always enough challenge for the more able.

Areas for development

- Ensure that pupils understand how the Christian values are securely rooted in the Christian narrative and how they can be applied to their life and learning.
- Governors should implement a systematic and rigorous process of monitoring and evaluation, so that they gain an independent view of the growth and development of the school's Christian ethos and character - as a basis for challenge and support.
- Give opportunities for pupils to assume greater responsibility for advocating, instigating and organising social actions for themselves. so that they can become highly effective as courageous advocates for change.
- Provide more challenge for more able pupils in RE, both within whole class teaching using the big questions, and in the structure of their independent tasks.

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

St George the Martyr is a popular, oversubscribed school, well respected in its local community. It is led in line with the school's Christian vision, to act with compassion, honesty and integrity; as Jesus did. Senior leaders and governors have taken notable strides in deepening the Christian character of the school since the previous denominational inspection.

The Christian vision has been significantly developed and now has a clearer and more direct focus. Capable of challenging and encouraging everyone involved, it is appropriately enriched by biblical underpinning. Widely articulated across the school, leaders, governors, teachers and pupils have a good and age-appropriate grasp of the theological root. A healthy proportion of parents have reported that they know and understand the significance of the vision, and through its high profile on the website and around the school, that proportion is inevitably growing. However, the associated Christian values, which preceded the vision, are not as securely located in a biblical underpinning. While pupils have a good understanding as to how their vision relates to the Christian narrative, they are not so clear when it comes to the values. Equally, they are less sure how they can apply them as a basis for personal flourishing.

Pupils come from very differing backgrounds and faith communities. Cohesion is driven by the Christian vision and pupils and adults are treated with due dignity. Respect for everyone is a watchword for adults and pupils alike, and discrimination is not tolerated. Wellbeing is effectively promoted and there is a positive approach to supporting mental health. Behaviour is exemplary both in classrooms and around the school. Pupils say that they always feel safe and report that rare cases of bullying are always dealt with effectively. Pupils enjoy coming to school and absences are below national averages.

Attitudes to learning are very good. Encouraged by the Christian vision, pupils nearly always give of their best. When measured against national comparisons, achievements on leaving the reception year, have improved over the last three years. During that time, national comparisons for junior-aged pupils shows that progress in the core academic subjects was mainly above average. While attainment has declined in the last school year, progress was still at least in line with national averages overall. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils give a similar picture. Pupils are proud of their school and appreciate how the adults help them succeed. The school has a strong focus on developing the personal spirituality of everyone. Across the school, pupils, and adults, have been grappling with what it means for them and others. Year 1 pupils have written perceptive definitions of spirituality, encompassing feelings of peace, beauty and companionship. Staff meet weekly to share prayers and spiritual reflections, a time that is reported to be helpful. As a basis for development, the school has recently adapted and adopted the diocesan spirituality policy. However, currently there is limited planning of spirituality across the curriculum to ensure age-related progression.

The school has been developing the use of 'big questions' as a focus for learning across the curriculum, including RE. These provide the 'hook' to drive questioning and exploration of global, environmental and moral considerations. However, pupils are not so confident or knowledgeable when it comes to their understanding of Christianity as a world faith. Inspired by the vision, pupils show commendable concern for others through supported charities. They take practical actions, for example, in litter collections within the locality. However, pupils do not assume enough responsibility for advocating, instigating and organising social actions themselves. Pupils' leadership is encouraged, nevertheless, through the contributions of groups such as the faith team with their role in evaluation.

There is a productive and very influential link with the local church and clergy. Governors, inspired by the Christian vision, continue to play a very positive role in developing the life and character of the school. They probe and search in discussions, for example developing spirituality, and have provided invaluable support in embedding the theological dimension to the vision. However, they are not sufficiently active in using the vision to monitor, analyse and evaluate evidence regarding the Christian ethos and character of the school. There is a strong and collaborative relationship with the diocese. Staff have undertaken a broad range of professional learning to support the school's Christian character. This includes effective induction programmes for new teachers. The school has drawn on good examples of practice from other schools and has started to share their practice in return. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school.

Collective worship, in close partnership with the local church, is an imaginative expression of the school's vision. Recognised as the heartbeat of the school, it is an essential focus of every day. Planning shows that worship is biblically based, ensuring clear and inspirational Christian messages across the course of each week. There is a fitting and commendable balance between achieving inclusion and maintaining Christian distinctiveness. Pupils of all faiths and backgrounds say that they feel part of what is happening and never feel awkward. Worship has a deeply reverential yet relaxed tone. On the day of the inspection, an admirable element of humour was used without losing due respect or compromising meaning. Singing is enthusiastic and Anglican traditions, such as lighting candles and observing liturgical seasons, are inventively practised and observed. Pupils have visited St Paul's Cathedral to experience other traditions of worship. Pupils talk warmly about how the experience helps them personally and spiritually. They take an active part in leading and, increasingly, the evaluation of worship. Prayer is a valued and regular part of school life and pupils have a good understanding of what it means. Each classroom has a resourced area for reflection and prayer. Pupils can add their own prayers to a prayer tree in the school entrance and frequently do so.

Attitudes to RE are very positive. Pupils enjoy the subject and understand how it benefits them in their learning generally. Provision meets the Church of England statement of entitlement. The curriculum is based on diocesan guidance and sensible adaptations are made to fit local circumstances. Learning in RE is enquiry-based and, in the lessons seen and from the work in pupils' books, draws successfully on a questioning and exploratory approach. Assessment procedures have recently been strengthened and embedded. Books show good coverage, although the standard of presentation can be variable. The more able pupils are not always offered enough challenge through teaching and in independent tasks. Pupils get some helpful feedback through teachers' marking and they, in turn, respond well to the advice that is given. The subject is well led and staff are effectively trained and prepared for teaching the subject at all stages in the school. The school draws on a strong and effective partnership with the diocese.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

Teaching is good overall and while most pupils make sound progress, the more able could achieve more, Overall, pupils achieve standards that are in line with the expectations of the diocesan units of work that contributes to the school's curriculum. The school's own judgements from their own monitoring and evaluation by leaders, and sometimes governors, are verified by the findings of this inspection.

Headteacher	Adam Young
Inspector's name and number	Dr Trevor Walker 908