

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Paul's CE Primary School

Elsworthy Road, Primrose Hill, London NW3 3DS	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	London
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Camden
Date/s of inspection	2 February 2017
Date of last inspection	30 January 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 100046
Interim Headteacher	Clive Hale
Inspector's name and number	John Logan 892

School context

St Paul's CE Primary School is a one form entry voluntary aided school. Over the past three years the school has had a series of interim Headteachers. The current headteacher was appointed from September 2016. The school serves a diverse community with 67% of families from a Christian and 16% from a Muslim background. 42% of children speak English as an additional language. Socio economically the school is very diverse, with families that would be considered very affluent and those who live in circumstances of acute deprivation. It has strong links with St Mary's Church, Primrose Hill.

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

- St Paul's has strong Christian values that are clearly expressed by most stakeholders and influence much of the life of the school.
- The school fosters positive relationships with all groups and this has a direct impact on areas such as achievement, attendance and behaviour.
- Collective worship is a key focal point for the school community, drawing on biblical themes to relate to children's own experiences.
- The effective leadership of religious education (RE) ensures that progress and standards in RE are generally above the national average, but broadly in line with other subjects.
- The strong leadership and vision of the governors and the clergy team have provided stability in a difficult period of transition for the school.
- The partnership with the local parish church is strong and enables the school develop a strong Christian vision.

Areas to improve

- To ensure an understanding of the school's distinctive Christian vision is fully understood by all .
- To develop children's understanding of the global dimension of Christianity.
- To develop opportunities for children to be involved in the overall planning, monitoring and evaluation of worship.
- To ensure that RE lessons are fully designed to better meet the needs of all abilities.

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

Distinctive Christian values at St Paul's are clearly articulated and shared throughout the school. The school motto drawn from the Bible, 'Shining as lights in the world', provides a good foundation for exploring these values. Most children and adults articulate well the link between the school's Christian values and how they relate to differing aspects of the school. This translates into good progress and high academic achievement across the school. There is a strong sense of community and high levels of inclusion overall. One Muslim parent spoke of how she felt valued as part of the school family and that 'every event is about coming together'. Parents who attend the local church and those of other faiths attribute the school's strength to their strong Christian values. These Christian values impact on all areas, including attendance which exceeds the national average and pupil exclusion which is rare. Behaviour is good overall and this is attributed to the Christian character and strong Christian values of the school.

There are a wide variety of experiences available to support spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC), including visits and links with the local church, charity events such as support for a sister school in Malawi. The significant involvement of the clergy team in the school provides a rich resource for developing a positive experience of spirituality. The school's understanding of spirituality is drawn from their Christian values which is 'all part of the weave that makes the community', as one governor described it. The school provides a number of opportunities for children to explore spirituality, such as worship tables in classrooms and regular visits to the church, but there are other opportunities that are under exploited such as the use of the outside space as an area for spiritual enquiry and reflection. Provision for moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school with a wide variety of opportunities in place for children to learn from within their own multi-cultural community and beyond in the wider area. Children recognise some aspects of Christianity as a world religion, although this is not as developed as it could be.

Relationships in the school are strong and this is attributed to the Christian values by the school. One parent spoke of 'the mature professional relationships between staff and children'. Another parent commented that although they do not attend church themselves they felt that their children were 'getting a very positive experience of Christianity from the school'. This is echoed by parents of different faiths who chose the school because the strong Christian values. Whilst Christian values clearly underpin the character of the school they are not yet not fully articulated by all members of the school community and are equally not yet fully embedded into the daily life of the school.

Religious education contributes well to the distinctive Christian character of the school and children are able to understand the relationship between Christian values and their own lives. An example of this came from a child, reflecting on the life of Jesus and the schools emphasis on the '4 Rs' of resilience, reflection, reciprocity and resourcefulness, commented that 'Jesus was like these and we want to be an amazing person like Jesus'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is a key focal point for the school community. It is valued by all and appreciated as a time to be 'calm, relaxed and close to God', as one child described it. This time and space is clearly appreciated by all members of the school community, including staff and parents who particularly value the regular church visits. Collective worship engages and inspires children and encourages them to apply understanding to their own lives. Adults speak of how meaningful collective worship is for them. It is inclusive and provides opportunities for children to engage with biblical material and Christian teaching in a meaningful way. Many aspects of Anglican liturgy are used in worship, including the use of the school and the Lord's prayer, children's own prayers and the sharing of the peace. Children particularly enjoy the regular opportunities for worship in the church. They also appreciate opportunities to follow up themes in class, where they are able to discuss and further reflect on the worship. Prayer forms a part of every act of worship, with opportunities for prayer and reflection regularly provided. It often incorporates prayer for particular key events in the world.

Collective worship enables children have a strong understanding of the significance of Jesus and the Trinitarian nature of Christianity. Children are able to articulate how themes from collective worship impact on their daily lives, for example, one child spoke of the theme of forgiveness saying 'it's nice to forgive as you get weights off your shoulders'.

Stories from the Bible are central to collective worship and are used well to reflect the Anglican year and children are able to make connections with their own experience, for example one child quite skilfully related the story of the presentation of Jesus in the temple to the school motto. Collective worship is led by a range of leaders from

inside the school, clergy and others, including children themselves. This ensures that worship opportunities are rich and diverse. Whilst formal collective worship is a strength of the school, opportunities for children to be involved in the overall planning, monitoring and evaluation of worship are limited.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Children achieve well in RE. Standards of attainment in RE are generally higher than national expectations, but broadly in line with other curriculum areas in the school. Overall, children make good progress given their starting points. Children engage well in RE lessons and mostly learn well, using a range of skills, particularly enquiry, analysis and interpretation. They are able to talk about why aspects of RE are important and reflect on the application of learning to their own lives. For example, children in the Reception Class were able to reflect on the Parable of the House of Rock by writing, 'my rocks are mummy and daddy and grandma and my cousin' and children in Key Stage 2 were able to consider the moral dilemmas presented in the Sikh story of Baisakhi. Children are generally confident, articulate and engage well in complex issues such as the nature of miracles. The quality of teaching in RE is mostly good, with some examples of outstanding practice. Learning is supported well by visits to the local church and to other places of worship during the year. Assessment procedures are in place and are generally used effectively to support planning, teaching and learning. However, written feedback to children and planning to meet the needs of different groups of children are inconsistent across the school. Where it works well children are given opportunities to reflect on learning, engage with their teachers in a learning dialogue and consequently improve their standards of work. Learning activities effectively address both learning about and learning from religion, for example, children exploring a topic on creation stories were able to consider how they are unique and respond with 'today I am thankful for' statements. The teaching of Christianity is good. This was demonstrated through a class working with the curate exploring the Eucharist in church, where they were introduced to the different parts of the service and its significance.

The subject leader for RE effectively monitors, supports and develops RE. She communicates expectations to senior leaders well and is able to inform staff about current developments in RE. This is evident through the carefully planned integration of the new diocesan schemes of work for RE into the current scheme.

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

The strong leadership, vision and support of the governors and the clergy team have provided stability in a period of significant transition for the school. Governors play an intrinsic role in holding the school to account through their active involvement and good understanding of strengths and areas to develop. They effectively support the new headteacher in articulating an explicit Christian vision which ensures that standards of achievement remain high. Governors annually review the Christian vision, value and aims of the school. The senior leadership team are developing a good understanding of development issues within a church school context. Whilst this vision is generally shared across the school it is not yet fully understood by all staff. The school motto underpins expectations of high achievement for all children, enabling leaders to support those who face significant barriers to learning through educational, social or economic disadvantage.

The school currently has a strong focus on the well-being of the whole school community. Staff spoke positively of the impact a recent INSET day on well-being has had on their work and parents support this, 'happy teacher, happy child' philosophy as one parent described it. Leaders have a good understanding of school performance which is based on strong self-evaluation. They are prepared well for the future leadership of church schools through involvement in diocesan training, support and advice. They make good use of advice and support from the diocese which is directly enhancing the Christian character of the school. The school has effectively addressed the issues raised in the last inspection.

There is a strong partnership with the local church, St Mary the Virgin and the support and involvement of the clergy enhances Christian vision of the school. Parents speak highly of the school as a church school, particularly the 'openness and approachability of the headteacher and staff' and how efficient the school is at dealing with problems when they arise. They feel they are welcomed into the school and are involved in many different aspects of school life.