

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Ann's CE Primary School

Avenue Road, London, N15 5JG	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	London
Previous SIAS inspection grade (predecessor school)	Outstanding
Name of multi-academy trust	LDBS Academies Trust
Date of inspection	25 January 2018
Date of last inspection (predecessor school)	December 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 139169
Executive Headteacher	Simon Knowles
Inspector's name and number	John Viner NS144

School context

St Ann's is a smaller than average primary school with a nursery, located in Tottenham and has been part of an academy Trust since 2013. Its 216 pupils reflect the rich diversity of the local area with a high proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds, many of whom speak English as an additional language. Higher than average proportions of pupils have special educational needs or are those for whom the school receives additional government funding. At least three quarters of pupils attend a church. Pupils make good progress and standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are around the national average. The school was inspected by Ofsted in 2016 when it was judged to be good. The school serves the parish of St Ann's, which is currently without an incumbent.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Ann's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The Christian values that the school promotes define its character, are evident in every aspect of its life, and have a profound impact on its work.
- Collective worship is central to school life, it is inclusive and affirms all who attend, regardless of their faith or belief.
- The warm, trusting relationships between and among adults and pupils create a harmonious and compassionate learning community where all are welcomed and valued.
- The introduction of a new religious education (RE) programme of study is beginning to add depth and rigour to pupils' experience.
- The executive head and head of school provide strong, ambitious and directional Christian leadership that is driving improvement.
- The school is providing steady and committed support to the parish church as it struggles with the current turbulence in its leadership.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that the arrangements for RE enable pupils to revisit the world faiths they encounter so that, by the time they leave the school, they have better knowledge of their key features.
- Review the way that RE lessons are presented so that they are always pitched at a level commensurate with pupils' maturity and thinking skills.
- Improve teachers' questioning skills in RE so that, as they move through the school, pupils encounter an increasing proportion of higher order questions that deepen and challenge their thinking.

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

Celebrated in its catchline, 'a community that aspires, believes & achieves', a wide range of Christian values underpin the school, define its purpose and are evident in every aspect of its life. These values are carefully selected throughout the year as a focus for the school's work. They are reinforced in collective worship and provide a background for learning. They are promoted through the regular newsletters and are used in discussions with parents. Parents say that the school makes its Christian distinctiveness 'a hundred percent clear' and, whatever their faith or background, they welcome the moral compass the school's values provides for their children. They say that staff model positive values and help their children to establish patterns of right behaviour and thinking. Pupils know, name and explain the relevance of each value to their life. As a result, this is a place where the trusting, relationships between and among adults and learners ensure that all are united in a harmonious learning community. Parents say that it is like a big family. Pupils say that they love the way that everyone plays together and cares for one other and that bullying does not take place.

Because they know that they are safe valued and special, pupils are keen to come to school, work hard and do their best. As a result, attendance is improving and fewer pupils are now absent for long periods. Standards are rising and pupils make good and sometimes rapid progress, often from low starting points. Pupils enjoy the ethnic mix that characterises St Ann's and, because the school places great importance on the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, they understand and celebrate diversity. They acquire and demonstrate positive attitudes of tolerance and respect. This excellent development can be seen in the way that pupils understand what to means to be a spiritual person. From the time they join the school they quickly learn that life has meaning and purpose and that faith has a place in their experience.

RE plays a key role in affirming the school's Christian identity. Pupils learn the nature and purpose of faith and belief and so they are excited about RE and love learning about religions. Regardless of their own faith, they value the partnership with the nearby parish church and the role played by the school in its life. They are secure in recognising that Christianity is a world faith in the context of a multicultural society and, by the time they leave the school, they are well-equipped for the next stage in their education.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship lies at the heart of the school day and pupils recognise its importance. Over the week, a changing pattern of worship adds variety, which pupils say they enjoy. Pupils come to worship enthusiastically and there is an air of anticipation as they gather reverently and sit attentively. The school's Christian values provide a framework around which worship is constructed and this helps to focus pupils' participation. There are many excellent opportunities for them to lead aspects of worship. The regular discussions within some acts of worship are well-managed so that pupils demonstrate responsibility both in thoughtful participation and self-control. Worship is inclusive and all who attend, regardless of faith, are affirmed and involved. Pupils' singing is joyous, tuneful and heartfelt and they develop a deep understanding of the nature of prayer and its relevance to their lives.

Worship is planned around a series of carefully chosen themes and led by a range of leaders, including staff and representatives of the church. It is also carefully evaluated by pupils, leaders and governors and this helps its ongoing development. Worship is always distinctly Christian, centred on the person of Jesus and the Christian belief that God is Father, Son and Spirit. However, all faiths are valued and respected within the context of Christian worship, without compromising this Christian distinctiveness. Pupils of other faiths, and their parents, agree that attending worship helps strengthen their own faith and appreciation of the values of belief. Worship includes elements of Anglican tradition and practice, which are reinforced through the monthly Praise Assembly, which takes place in the parish church. Parents say how much they value the opportunity to attend this act of worship, as well as the weekly celebration of pupils' achievements.

Prayer infuses every aspect of school life. From the moment they enter the school, pupils learn the nature and purpose of prayer so that it becomes their daily experience. Because of this, they make excellent use of the quiet, reflection areas in each classroom, engaging in thought and writing their own prayers for display or for use in worship. They develop a mature confidence in personal, private and public prayer and many pupils pray openly, without written prompts. This contributes to the deeply spiritual nature of collective worship.

In addition to time in school, pupils have a broad experience of worship in a wider context through attending joint acts of worship with the two other schools in the Trust; the South Tottenham Church Schools Festival; and the diocesan annual service, which takes place in St Paul's Cathedral. This breadth of experience and personal involvement makes worship part of the fabric of school life.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

RE is given a high priority and is regarded as a core subject in the school's curriculum. Because the school's promotion of spiritual thinking is so successful, pupils make good progress, often from low starting points so that standards of attainment are mostly in line with national expectations. Pupils work hard and do their best so that their work, presentation and achievements are as good in RE as in other core subjects.

Teaching of RE is generally at least good and many pupils say how much they enjoy the subject because their teachers make it fun. Pupils are universally enthusiastic about RE and a significant number say that it is their very favourite subject. However, sometimes teachers set work that is not closely matched to pupils' maturity and the development of their thinking skills. This can limit its impact when questions are too challenging for pupils' deep understanding. Similarly, although some pupils attain a deep and secure spiritual understanding, this is not always recognised in the way that work is presented or in the quality of the questions that teachers ask. In some cases, teachers become too focused on the activity at the cost of deep learning.

The school has recently adopted a new RE scheme of work which is far more demanding and challenging than its predecessor. The curriculum is enriched by an extensive programme of visits to places of worship. However, the balance of coverage between Christianity and other faiths currently limits pupils' learning because it is possible to encounter a world faith only at an early stage in their intellectual development. Therefore, by the time they leave the school they have an excellent knowledge of Christianity and the Bible but are less secure in the key points of the range of faiths they have studied. Good work has been done in planning for the assessment of pupils' learning in RE but this is not yet embedded enough to provide a secure picture of pupils' progress and development.

The new programme of study has been carefully and thoroughly introduced by the very experienced and effective subject leader. He has audited teachers' subject knowledge and has rigorous systems for monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning. This has helped to identify where teachers need to develop their capacity to meet the increased demand of the new scheme. As a result, the subject leader has been able to ensure that there is an effective programme of professional development to raise teachers' skills and knowledge. The subject leader works across the three Trust schools and this adds significant capacity that is bringing about progressive developments in RE to the benefit of each school.

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

As a member of the Academy Trust, the school benefits from the clear, strategic and faithful Christian leadership of the Executive Headteacher. As a result, leaders and governors share and articulate an ambitious Christian vision for the school that is driving improvement, raising standards and giving pupils a strong foundation of values for life. Leaders confidently live out the school's explicit Christian values and this is reflected in the way that school policies become practice. This is outstanding promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Parents say they are inspired by the school: they trust its leaders and hold them and their work in high esteem. Pupils contribute to self-evaluation through the Junior Leadership Team. Governors are actively involved in school life, undertake effective monitoring and champion the school in the community. They have ensured that the school's provision of RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements. They recognise the school's future leadership needs and plan to meet them through the increased capacity afforded by being part of the three-school trust. Through this effective self-evaluation, leaders and governors know the school well and plan effectively for its further improvement.

There are many good links with local, national and global charities, which are of mutual benefit to the school and enable pupils to experience Christian compassion in action. For example, pupils chose to raise funds to help the victims of the Grenfell Tower disaster and are frequently engaged with charitable giving within the borough. A national charity for the elderly contributes voluntary readers to work with pupils. The annual international evening brings the local community together and helps pupils to understand that they are part of a Christian global community. The school is rightly proud of its steel pan band, which recently appeared at the Royal Albert Hall as part of the schools prom praise.

There is a longstanding and strong partnership with the parish church. The school has always benefitted from the involvement of clergy and staff in its life. However, at the moment, the parish church is going through a period of extreme turbulence and the school is working closely with a church warden who is also a governor, to ensure that the church is supported. This is making a significant contribution to the church and ensuring that the partnership of church and school continues to bear Christian witness to its local community.