

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

### St Jérôme Bilingual School

<b>Address</b>	120-138 Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex, HA1 2DJ		
<b>Date of inspection</b>	12 March 2019	<b>Status of school</b>	Primary Free School inspected as VA
<b>Diocese</b>	London	<b>URN</b>	142904

<b>Overall Judgement</b>	<b>Grade</b>	Good
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>Additional Judgements</b>		
<b>The impact of collective worship</b>	<b>Grade</b>	Good
<b>The effectiveness of religious education (RE)</b>	<b>Grade</b>	Good

#### School context

St Jérôme Church of England Bilingual School is a primary school with 178 pupils on roll. The school community is mixed religiously and culturally with no dominant group. Many pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages. Opened as a free school in response to local need in 2016, St. Jérôme takes in a new cohort each year and currently caters for children from Reception to Year 2.

#### The school's Christian vision

An aspirational, multilingual, multicultural education community that empowers everyone: to grow and flourish, to gain in knowledge, wisdom and skills and to translate the love of God for all people into words and actions.

#### Key findings

- Bold and innovative leadership effectively uses a bilingual curriculum to develop, in children, an interest in different people and different cultures and an acceptance of 'other'-ness.
- Inclusive, nurturing relationships, have a significant impact on all members of the school community. These are highly effective in sustaining pupils and adults at times of personal need, supporting their mental health and emotional wellbeing extremely well.
- All school leaders ensure that the school's Christian vision runs throughout all aspects of school life. The school's vision is firmly rooted in biblical truth but is not always recognised as such by some parts of the community.
- Collective worship, Godly Play and class reflection times offer all pupils a safe and secure space for thinking and contemplation to ask and answer the big questions of life.
- Inspiring leadership supports all staff in the delivery of an RE curriculum that is keenly focused to ensure that pupils 'gain in knowledge' a respectful understanding of world religions.

#### Areas for development

- Teaching about the unique elements of Christianity, as a world-wide, diverse faith needs to be more explicit so that pupils can articulate their ideas about Christianity as well as they can about other faiths. This includes teaching about the Christian belief in the trinitarian nature of God.
- Enable teachers to develop the understanding and confidence to be able to grasp spontaneous opportunities to develop spirituality within and without the curriculum.
- As the school population grows, establish a programme of age appropriate opportunities for pupils to be proactive in social action projects and to understand democratic process so that they can translate the love of God for all people into words and actions.

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. Jérôme is a truly inclusive, welcoming educational community with roots firmly planted in biblical truth. The courageous decision to establish it as a bilingual school stems from a desire to embed both 'welcome' and understanding of 'other' into the very building blocks of the school community. The school's admissions policy ensures all are welcomed regardless of religion, race, ability, disability or lifestyle. Therefore, leaders are succeeding in developing a community that loves its neighbours and 'translate[s] the love of God for all people into words and actions'. Governors recognise the responsibilities of leading a church school and regularly meet to pray before making decisions. The fact that various parents echoed the sentiments of one who said '[You can] always sense that, in this school, there is something beyond... something deeper' shows that this impacts greatly on the ethos of the school.

The school community benefits from many links with charities and organisations that reflect the school's vision and values, for example, 'Christians Against Poverty' and 're:generation'. Children and adults benefit from involvement in the local parishes whilst vicars describe them 'bringing a source of life into the parish'. Close links with the diocese and another Church of England school means mutual benefits from sharing good practice, training and support with governors' self-evaluation. Using language as a unifying force, links have been established with a school in France and plans are underway to link with schools in French-speaking Africa. However, these initiatives are too new to be able to ascertain the impact.

National assessments show that standards are above the national average. However, it must be noted that the school is relatively recently established and end of Key Stage 1 and 2 data is not yet available. School leaders are unashamed in their determination to focus, not just test scores but, on curricula that 'empower everyone: to grow and flourish'. Therefore, the curriculum at St. Jérôme teaches children to communicate effectively, work collaboratively and demonstrate care and concern for others. Considerable investment in Godly Play for children and the innovative 'Understanding Christianity: Understanding Our School' course for staff enhance the spiritual development of pupils and staff. Staff say that this course gives a real insight into the unique features of a church school and how they can support it. Intervention strategies and pastoral provision have a significant impact on pupils' learning, particularly those with learning challenges, and enables them to flourish.

Aiming to translate 'the love of God for all people into words and actions', leaders at St Jérôme are ensuring the school grows into an outward-looking school. Pupils learn about disadvantage within the school, the local community and globally. Staff, pupils and parents are involved in a range of social-action projects. For example, children bake flapjacks for local homeless people and the whole community collects food for a foodbank. Currently, these projects are led by adults. During a lesson about biblical rules for living, pupils imagined the impact of living without rules. A Year 1 child explained how it would be 'devastating' if everyone ignored the needs of others. Parents consider that the bilingual nature of the school encourages children to be interested in other cultures, describing its impact on the children as 'not afraid... not insulated from others'.

Relationships within the school are overwhelmingly positive. School leaders have made bold decisions about using bilingualism to 'promote an inclusive community that empowers everyone: to grow and flourish'. This, alongside the prominence of Godly Play, where an atmosphere of respect and acceptance results in a community of children and adults who accept 'other-ness', celebrate difference and explore ways of working together for the good of all. Pupils say they feel safe with both children and the grown-ups at school. There are very few reports of poor behaviour and parents report that these are dealt with quickly and compassionately with a focus on forgiveness, reconciliation and rehabilitation. RE lessons also feed in to this ethos as children explore how it feels to forgive and be forgiven. One girl described how 'it feels kind of joyful to forgive... it's like you don't have to keep on being grumpy [about the past]'

Keenly focused RE teaching and a well-considered curriculum ensure that pupils 'gain in knowledge' a respectful understanding of world religions. They particularly enjoy learning about the different religions and scriptures and recognise that understanding religion will help them understand their neighbours when they grow up. This provision reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education. Teaching about the unique elements of Christianity as a world-wide, diverse faith needs to be as explicit as teaching about other faiths. Presently children perceive this as 'normal' life and learning at St Jérôme, rather than explicit Christian practice and theology.

Staff and parents state being part of the community has provided support through even the most difficult of times. One parent summed up the ethos of the school as 'just... shalom, just... welcome!' Leaders ensure that policies,

protocols and staff training not only support positive and safe relationships but that they stem from, and move the school towards, achieving its vision.

Daily worship at St. Jérôme is highly valued as a special time where adults and pupils come together. Pupils report that they enjoy these times very much, particularly the opportunity to stop, think, be quiet and focus on God in their own ways.

Pupils understand the deeper meanings behind many Bible stories but do not always recognise that distinctively biblical teaching is also the inspiration for the school's Christian vision. Through Godly Play, children learn the essential stages of worshipping together. The Eucharist is not celebrated in the school, but children are familiar with the concept through termly 'sharing meals' at Easter, Pentecost and Harvest and through monthly 'feasts' in Godly Play. Currently, the structures of Godly Play and collective worship are the main vehicles for promoting spirituality amongst pupils. Staff now need to develop the understanding and confidence needed to be able to grasp spontaneous opportunities for developing spirituality within and without the curriculum.

The impact of the vision to be a 'multilingual, multicultural education community' is demonstrated by the fact that families from various faiths attended the school's Ash Wednesday service. Indeed, the well-established parent prayer group welcomes member of all faiths and welcomes parents to pray in their own languages.

In line with the vision 'to translate the love of God for all people into words and actions', times of collective worship generally end with a challenge to 'go out and make a difference'. For example, throughout the 40 days of Lent, the school community is challenged to carry out 40 acts of radical generosity. Collective worship is thoughtfully and effectively planned by a strategic group including school leaders, governors and local clergy. The recently established school council is beginning to play a role in the planning and evaluation of collective worship.

#### **The effectiveness of RE is Good**



The quality of teaching in RE is good and pupils enjoy their RE lessons very much. Adaptations to lessons or the deployment of additional adults ensure that all children, regardless of need are able to access and benefit from the RE curriculum in the best way that they can.

A rigorous system of assessment shows that attainment and progress in RE is good. Because of their ease with languages, children often demonstrate an exceptional understanding of religious vocabulary and this helps them to explore even quite difficult and abstract concepts.

Executive headteacher	Daniel Norris
Inspector's name and number	Jan Matthews 855