

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Millbrook Park CE Primary School

Millbrook Park CE Primary School, School House Lane, Mill Hill, NW7 1JF	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	London
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	None
Local authority / Date of academy conversion	N/A
Name of multi-academy trust / federation	LDBS Academies Trust
Date/s of inspection	23 March 2017
Date of last inspection	None
Type of school and unique reference number	140601
Executive Principal	Anthony David
Inspector's name and number	Jan Matthews 855

Context

Millbrook Park CE Primary (LDBS Academies Trust) opened three years ago, in 2014, to serve a community that is developing in a large, new housing estate as it is built and occupied. Eventually, the school will provide three forms of entry for pupils aged 3-11, making it an average sized school for its location. Currently there are two classes in each Nursery, Reception, Year One and Year Two cohort. The school has a higher than average of SEND pupils (15%). Over 60% of pupils have EAL and over 90% of pupils are of non-white British ethnic origin. Pupils enter the school with low baseline entry attainment levels (5% expected, 95% below). The school buildings are new and there is plenty of outside space. The school works closely with its 'sister' school, St Paul's CE Primary school, sharing an Executive Head and several governors.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Millbrook Park as a Church of England school are outstanding

- All school leaders understand the unique position of the school as the centre for a newly established urbanisation and accept the responsibility for their part in growing the community.
- The overwhelming ethos is one of welcome and inclusion which, in turn, leads to children feeling safe and secure to learn.
- The school values are thoroughly embedded into daily school life and are understood to be distinctively Christian by all members of the school community.
- The dynamic and aspirational Head of School has high ambitions for the children and, through careful planning, is laying sure foundations for a community of hard working, like minded staff, supportive parents and lively, curious learners.
- All stakeholders, including local churches, parents, the diocese, governors and staff have been actively involved in establishing the ethos of the new school which has led to a strong sense of ownership and belonging.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that all children have access to high quality RE teaching that promotes deep thinking and an ability to question what is taught.
- Opportunities to develop spirituality are used well but leaders need to develop a clearer definition of spirituality that is understood by all, in order to develop a more cohesive strategy for promoting spirituality.

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

Leaders at Millbrook Park are united and passionate about their vision to be at the heart of the newly developing community around the school. Rooted in biblical truth, the school's powerful, values-based ethos is understood by the children and lived out in the day to day relationships within the school. Good strategies have been developed to involve families in recognising, respecting and upholding the values at home. Parents speak positively of the moral compass that they provide. It is the vision of school leaders that these families will provide a bedrock on which the rest of the community can be built.

Relationships amongst all stakeholders are excellent. Right from the beginning, pastoral support for children and their families has been planned into the school's development. Parents speak highly of the staff, describing them as 'warm', 'caring for them like their own' and being like a 'second family'. The positive and productive partnerships between school and home provide children with consistency and are a real strength. Attendance is very good and matters of discipline are dealt with using Christian principles of forgiveness, fresh starts and guidance. Children, including the disadvantaged and those with a range of special needs and disabilities, speak of feeling safe at school. This feeling of physical and emotional safety enables children to focus on learning and contributes to the good, and improving, standards they achieve. Pupil Premium funding is used wisely to ensure equality of opportunity. As a result of highly effective pastoral care and systematic follow up when there are problems, attendance is good and exclusions very rare.

The curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of opportunities to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally and acceptance of diversity is a real strength. Children of different faiths, and of no faith, speak intelligently and enthusiastically about their similarities and differences and can explain why it is important to understand each other's' backgrounds. A 'World Faiths' group has been established amongst parents in order to utilize the expertise of parents in accurately portraying the rich and varied community around the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worshipping and praying together has an absolutely central part in strengthening the community at Millbrook Park. At the beginning of each day, children and staff of all faiths happily join together, learn together, sing together and share times of reflection and prayer. This is followed by the exhortation to go and apply what has been learned throughout the rest of the day.

Children take this exhortation seriously and, as one boy stated 'You get good examples to remind you, like the good Samaritan, he was kind even to someone he didn't know, so I am trying to be kind as well.' Children speak of enjoying assembly times, particularly the music and singing and how it makes them feel calm at the start of the day. The effectiveness of worship at Millbrook Park can be seen in the children's respect, understanding and tolerance for matters of faith and their developing understanding of themselves as spiritual beings.

Prayer is a central part of daily life with opportunities for children to pray woven into the school day. In addition to this, a parents' prayer group meets regularly and senior leaders pray together for members of the school community as well as for the work of the school. Parents who are not comfortable praying as part of a group are encouraged to use the Prayer Box where requests can be placed and are then taken to the group. Children can add their own personal prayers, anonymously, by adding a bead to a net or by adding a written note to a prayer board.

The highly effective collective worship leader, alongside a representative of St. Paul's Church, plan and monitor the quality and impact of collective worship. This dynamic worship planning team have established a structured, progressive and thoroughly Bible based programme for collective worship. Children's own starting points are taken into consideration so that children with little or no faith background can access the lessons behind the stories. No children are withdrawn from assemblies.

The routines and symbols used in daily worship are firmly grounded in Christian tradition. The vicar's wife and the Headship team regularly lead worship in the Anglican style. Children are respectful during worship and they are enthusiastic about joining in through reading Psalms or prayers. Various aspects of Anglican tradition are taught as appropriate through the Church's year. Children are taught about the Trinity and the person of Jesus through celebrations such as Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Easter and Pentecost. Children's understanding of God as the Holy Spirit is limited, however, to the celebration of Pentecost. School leaders recognise the need to improve the children's understanding of the trinity by investigating opportunities, beyond Pentecost, to explore the character of the Holy Spirit.

Collective worship is a warm, welcoming time when everyone comes together to stop, take time out to reflect on their experiences and actions, learn from the teachings of Jesus and give thanks for their many blessings. Because children are exhorted to apply the lessons learned, the impact of assembly goes way beyond the time spent

together.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious Education (RE) has a high profile at Millbrook Park with a minimum of 5% of the timetable being allocated to RE lessons. Children say that they enjoy RE and their work shows that they are achieving good standards against national expectations. They are curious about religion and why people make the choices that they do. Learners recognise that they live in a multi-faith society and can explain why understanding each other's' faith will help them to live peaceably together as they grow up. One child vented his frustration that adults don't seem to 'get' this like children do. Work in books and the school's own assessment data shows that the vast majority of children are on track to achieve expectations by the end of the year.

The RE curriculum is well planned and rich in opportunities for families of all faiths to be involved in sharing resources and artefacts. The parents' 'World Faith Group' make excellent contributions to improving children's understanding. For example, at Persian New Year, a parent brought in artefacts and shared some of the traditions of the festival. Because of these opportunities, children are developing respect for the concept of faith itself and for the religious practices of others. The study of Christianity is systematically planned to build upon learners' growing knowledge and understanding and the school's Christian values are skilfully woven into the curriculum.

RE teaching at Millbrook Park is good overall. The subject leader has quite rightly identified a need to establish a 'whole staff team' approach to the teaching of RE in order to ensure consistency across all classes. In a particularly impressive lesson, the teacher skilfully utilised multi-sensory, interactive storytelling techniques to encourage the children to think deeper and deeper into the meaning behind the story. The subject leader recognises that, in order to improve further, all lessons need to be at this standard. Lessons and standards of work are well monitored and, when issues are identified, timely training and interventions are put into place. For example, recent and very effective staff training has resulted in a clear and consistent approach to the marking of RE. Marking now has a focus on encouraging deep thinking and challenge in order to move children forward. Teachers are clear that they are marking work to move children on in RE, not in English.

Evidence indicates that, under the current leadership, there is good capacity for teaching and learning in RE to improve even further.

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

The executive head, head of school and the governors all articulate and live out a shared, clear and focused vision for the school. The four core school values feed directly into their vision for following the example of Jesus in building up the community within and beyond the school gates. This vision is shared explicitly with staff and parents and feeds into the school's development plan. The whole school community was involved in establishing the school's core values which has resulted in a sense of shared ownership and embarking on a journey together. These values are so embedded into the fabric of the school that they are marked on the ground where families enter the school each morning.

The school's leaders and governors are highly ambitious for the pupils at the school. Because of this, they carefully monitor all aspects of school life, including the effectiveness of the school as a distinctively Christian school. Governors have a thorough understanding of the school's performance on many levels and they work closely with the headship team to evaluate the effectiveness of actions and to plan for future improvements. Strong leadership of both religious education and collective worship ensures that both areas have a high profile in the life of the school and that statutory requirements are met. Opportunities to promote spirituality through collective worship, the use of imagination, and time for reflection are used well. Leaders recognise that, in order to develop a tight and cohesive strategy for the promotion of spirituality, they need to develop a clearer definition of spirituality that is understood by all.

Although Millbrook Park is a relatively new school, there is already evidence of mutual and substantive benefits resulting from the school's partnerships with others. Relationships with three local churches (particularly St Paul's Church) and St. Paul's School have been systematically developed through close cooperation between the school's leaders and the clergy. Both schools have already benefitted from shared training and expertise and there is the potential for sharing staff and training leaders as Millbrook Park expands. Staff regularly benefit from training and guidance given from the diocese.

Millbrook Park is a new school and, although still small in numbers, the leaders have high aspirations for the children and a relentless drive towards achieving them.