

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

### St Michael's CE Primary School

Bounds Green Road, London N22 8HE

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>London</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of academy conversion	January 2013
Name of multi-academy trust	London Diocesan Board for Schools Academies Trust
Date of inspection	13 March 2018
Date of last inspection	March 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Academy 139175
Executive Headteacher / Head of School	Simon Knowles and Julia Christou
Inspector's name and number	John Pearson-Hicks NS760

#### School context

St Michael's is a one form entry primary school with 178 pupils. The school is situated in Wood Green and serves one of the most deprived wards in the country. The school is part of the London Diocesan Board for Schools Academies Trust and the executive headteacher works across three schools forming a tri-school partnership. A large proportion of pupils are of ethnic minority backgrounds and pupil mobility is high. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average whereas pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities is similar to the national average. Since the last inspection a new executive headteacher and head of school have been appointed.

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

- The explicit Christian values are embedded in the life of the school and are evident in all aspects of its work.
- Collective worship is central to the life of the school and is highly creative, inspirational and inclusive, enabling all members of the school community to understand the purpose and impact of prayer.
- Pupils are exceedingly enthusiastic about Religious education (RE) and achieve high standards, supported by an effective and well delivered curriculum with consistently outstanding teaching.
- The partnership between the school and parish church is collaborative and highly effective.
- The executive headteacher, head of school, staff and governors are united in their aspirations for all the children and families and this is rooted in the school's Christian vision.

#### Areas to improve

- Complete the whole school review of the school's mission statement and implement and embed changes.

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

The distinctive Christian character of the school is clearly lived out through its mission statement, 'Inspired to excel with the freedom to dream'. The whole community clearly understands how its Christian values impact on their daily lives and their aspirations for the future. The focussed work on explicit Christian values means all pupils have a very good grasp on their meaning and practical application. The passion and drive of senior leaders and governors clearly impacts on the children's personal, social, moral and spiritual development. The impact of the current years' Christian values; creation, hope, service and compassion are clearly visible in all aspects of the school's work. The Junior Leadership Team are highly articulate in explaining their roles and the impact their work has on school

development. The impact being that they clearly understand that Christian values are 'useful' in making sure the school is a 'united community'. The school has improved RE provision through highly effective teaching, the use of reflective questioning and a creative use of the syllabus. This has led to deepening the children's understanding of Christianity, other world faiths, and how people hold different views about those of faith or no faith. The impact is that the children apply the values in their relationships with one another. Many children enter the school with skill levels below that of their national expected age. The rate of progress has increased significantly in recent years and now all pupils make at least good progress, regardless of their starting points. By the end of Key Stage 2 levels of attainment are in line with or above the national average. The quality and breadth of work in RE books is of a very high standard. Children 'fizz' with enthusiasm about learning and why the school is a 'safe and fun place to be'. The impact of clear systems and structures means the children, including the most vulnerable, and especially those who have recently arrived in the community, feel valued and understand why school is important. The impact of the school's current Christian values alongside the values of the previous two academic years has ensured that the children are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the school's Christian identity. Children give many examples of why school is important. For example, 'we love our learning because the teachers always make it interesting and fun' and because 'teachers help us think deeply'. Consequently children enjoy coming to school, are well behaved and families feel well supported. The children's attendance is improving because the head of school and other staff take a proactive approach in supporting children and families so that they are in school regularly. The calm atmosphere throughout the school, alongside a tangible commitment to meeting the needs of all learners, add to the aspirations of staff and pupils. The children articulate the positive impact that staff and the rector have on the school in deepening their understanding of Christian values. It is evident that the whole community see the relationship between school and church as mutually supportive and inclusive. The school ensures parents are well supported in carefully planned and targeted ways. Parents describe how 'available and on the gate' staff are which ensures problems or concerns are dealt with promptly. Parents and governors explain clearly the positive impact the school's distinctive Christian character and the teaching of RE has on the children's lives and explain 'it is Bible based and inside our children'. Leaders are focussed on ensuring all children get the most out of their time in St Michael's. There is a real sense that this school is working in highly effective ways alongside the other two members of the tri-school partnership to ensure resources are deployed well.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

A daily act of worship is a key focal point of the school day where the Bible, Christian values and themes are 'brought alive' and 'make us think about others'. As a result, collective worship makes a significant contribution to the children's understanding of their place in the world and their personal sense of spirituality. Children articulate a clear enjoyment of collective worship because all those involved in leading worship make it meaningful so that they 'know how to apply the values to what we do each day'. Senior leaders, clergy and governors work closely together to ensure worship reflects the Christian values selected for each term. As a result children make effective links between the Christian faith and liturgical year alongside issues facing the community and the wider world. Children confidently explain how school worship impacts on their relationships and understanding of each other 'even if you have a different faith or don't believe'. Clear systems in planning and evaluation, alongside the effective involvement of children in worship, has developed the children's understanding of how the school's values relate to Jesus' teaching and the Bible. This is evident in the work of the Junior Leadership Team who enthusiastically communicate how the school's values and worship helps them 'put the values into our work'. Children are regularly involved in the planning and leading of worship which enhances their enjoyment of worship. Children, staff and governors evaluate worship and feedback is acknowledged and responded to by the school leaders. As a result, the children now sit in a 'horseshoe' configuration so that pupils and staff feel more connected to those who are leading. Consequently, pupils have a sense that worship is 'valuable and useful'. Staff, clergy and children see collective worship, singing and prayer, as an important part of the school day. As a result the whole community feel united 'in the presence of God'. Over the past couple of years there has been an increased focus on prayer throughout the day. There are many opportunities for children to pray, write their own prayers and to share prayer time with one another. Children have an age appropriate understanding of the links between God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit which has been enhanced by the use of reflective and open-ended questioning. Children appreciate the involvement of the rector and explain how he 'helps us speak the same language as God'. Relationships between school and church have developed since the last inspection and this plays a significant part in deepening children's understanding of the Bible and how parents view the positive impact of worship for all pupils. Children explain clearly how prayer and worship impacts on them as individuals and in respecting and understanding the views of others.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

RE has a very high profile in the life of the school. Children 'fizz' with excitement when they are talking about RE and their learning. They know RE is 'as important as literacy and maths'. This is clearly evident in the outstanding

quality and breadth of work in the children's RE books and the way in which children talk about RE and its impact. Since the last inspection a new syllabus and assessment system has been put in place. There has been a significant focus on 'reflective thinking' which has resulted in rapid improvement in RE and why the children articulate their enjoyment of the subject so clearly. Staff are creative in their delivery of RE lessons. As a result children understand that learning in RE is meaningful because it helps them 'understand the world and other peoples' problems'. The school systematically plots the progress of pupils and ensures marking is of a very high standard. The impact of good quality, consistent marking, is that pupils are highly engaged in 'reflective thinking and writing'. This has enabled children to gain a deeper understanding of the subject. Children are clearly motivated by RE lessons which are engaging, enjoyable and interesting. This helps children to share their knowledge and understanding with others and contributes to the overall success and enjoyment of RE. Since the last inspection the academic standards have risen and RE makes a significant contribution to this development. The quality of written work and other forms of recording RE learning is consistently high throughout the school. A consistent approach to teaching and learning in RE is embedded. Consequently there is a common understanding of expectations in teaching and learning which supports all children to make very good progress irrespective of their starting point. One reason the children give for why they enjoy RE is that 'get to voice their own opinions'. For example, one teacher asked children to consider what the meaning of different peace symbols were, and why they felt drawn to one, rather than another. Children enjoyed this as it gave them an opportunity to 'justify their thinking' within a Christian framework. The impact of consistently outstanding teaching and learning is that the whole school community highly value RE and children are aspirational in applying their knowledge and understanding in other contexts. Parents say that RE is good because 'it not only teaches the children about Christianity but also gives them understanding of other faiths'. Since the last inspection the RE leaders across the tri-school partnership have worked systematically to develop teaching and learning through moderating, evaluating and in supporting staff in the delivery of RE. The syllabus, together with a focus on developing the creative skills of teachers, has led to a highly effective RE curriculum. As a result, the staff are confident and enthusiastic about teaching RE and feel well supported by leaders. It is clear that RE and achievement features regularly in governors' meetings and that there is a clear system for review and development. Consequently, governors are knowledgeable about the curriculum and the high standards achieved in RE, which in turn informs accurate self-evaluation. The next stage of development is to create a larger resource base for RE.

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

The executive headteacher, alongside the head of school and other school leaders and governors, communicate passionately a sense of drive and aspiration based on the school's strapline, 'Inspired to excel with the freedom to dream'. This vision is rooted in a Christian understanding of inclusiveness and koinonia which sits alongside the specific Christian value for each term. Since the last inspection the school has worked consistently to ensure the explicit school values are embedded and have a significant impact on the life of the school. The school is currently reviewing its mission statement, which has been in place over five years. This is to ensure that it speaks explicitly about their hope for education in a more clearly defined inclusive Christian framework. The whole community, effectively led by the senior leaders and rector, are clearly committed to living and working by the school's Christian values. The school has effectively utilised its partnership within the Local Academies Trust, tri-schools and diocesan advisor to ensure rapid development over the last three years. Children are exceptionally enthusiastic and talk confidently about school values and the impact it has on them and the whole community. Parents and children talk of the excellent pastoral support they receive from the head of school and other staff. This, combined with the clarity of the Christian values, has a significant impact on the children's personal, spiritual and academic development which is central to the school's mission. Children relate their experience of Jesus and God through the school's values and collective worship. They give many examples of how they are able to apply them to their lives. Consequently, all children enjoy, achieve and aspire to do their very best because they know that they are in a safe and caring Christian environment. Leaders ensure there is a rich and diverse curriculum that celebrates the backgrounds of all, and makes learning highly engaging. The high profile of RE and collective worship in the school ensures it meets statutory requirements. Embedded systems for reviewing and evaluating the work and impact of the school leaders has ensured continuous development as a distinctively Christian school. Purposeful induction for all staff ensures that all staff know what the expectations are of working in this church school. All leaders are actively involved in the school's regular self-evaluation and they accurately evaluate their work. This reinforces and celebrates what has been achieved as well as identifying future points for development. The school has thought carefully about succession planning and the needs and development of all staff. Consequently they deploy staff effectively. The children, alongside staff and parents, are very clear that this school has a distinctly Christian foundation and relate this clearly to the Bible and the school's Christian values.

SIAMS report March 2018 St Michael's CE Primary School, Wood Green N22 8HE