

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Thomas's Church of England Primary School			
Address	Appleford Road, North Kensington, London W10 5EF		
Date of inspection	5 March 2020	Status of school	Voluntary aided primary
Diocese	London	URN	100492

Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	Grade	Excellent
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Excellent
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Excellent

School context

St Thomas's is a primary school with 230 pupils on roll. Pupils' come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, the largest group being Black African and the smallest, White British. Very many pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is well above national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages. Since September 2019 the school has been part of a federation with the nearby St Clement and St James Primary School and they share the executive headteacher.

The school's Christian vision

Our vision is rooted in Jesus' words, 'let the children come to me, and do not stop them because the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these.' (Matthew 19:14). Belonging to St Thomas' means we all work together to create a community where the riches of the Christian life overflow into school life, so that everyone feels valued, fulfilled and loved.

Key findings

- A clear, explicit and ambitious Christian vision is shared by leaders, governors and staff and lived out in every aspect of the school's life so that adults and pupils, regardless of their faith or background, are valued, thrive and flourish.
- Pupils enter the school with lower than average levels of attainment. However, the school's clear vision leads to excellent, personalised and compassionate support so that, each one makes excellent progress and, by the time they leave the school, most attain standards that are higher than national expectations.
- The vision leads to a strong sense of community in all the school does and pupils love the high levels of engagement with the cultural diversity around them. In partnership with the parish church, the school is recognised as a beacon of hope and a centre of reconciliation and support to the community it serves.
- Collective worship is an articulation of the school's inclusive vision. It is deeply Christian, yet its richness and variety embraces pupils of all faiths and beliefs and affirms all who attend. Religious Education (RE) is expertly taught. As an outworking of the vision, pupils learn deep lessons about Christianity and can make strong and relevant connections between the other faiths they study.

Areas for development

- Extend the opportunities that pupils have to take the initiative in identifying injustice or inequality and the actions they take to become agents of change.
- Build on existing good practice to ensure that the new programme of relationships education is implemented effectively to follow the guidance provided by the Church of England and the government.

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

This is a school where leaders, governors and staff share and articulate a deeply Christian vision that is evident in every part of their work. This vision, recently reviewed with stakeholders, is rooted in Jesus' appeal to children and centred on belonging to the family of God. It is utterly inclusive, embracing all members of the school community, regardless of their faith or background. Parents say, 'no matter where you come from, the school respects your faith'. Leaders and governors promote the vision relentlessly. It is simplified for pupils through a focus on friendship, forgiveness, respect and perseverance, which underline the warm, compassionate relationships between and among adults and pupils. Pupils quickly respond to the loving, welcoming environment that the school provides and, as a result, behave impeccably, embrace diversity and develop extraordinary levels of mutual care and support. Pupils and their parents say that the values they gain from the school provide them with a lasting foundation for life. The partnership with parents is very strong, helping leaders and governors to know their school well and respond quickly to concerns.

Many pupils join the school with lower than average starting points but implementing the school's ambitious vision leads to close, personal attention that ensures that individual needs are precisely met so that pupils can flourish. For example, there are excellent systems to ensure that pupils who find it hard to settle when they arrive at school, are reassured, supported and prepared for their learning. Much attention is given to building pupils' knowledge of words and how to express themselves. This results in measurable improvements to their oracy and their developing confident articulation. Because the vision is about belonging, pupils know that they are safe, valued and special. Consequently, they behave impeccably, get on well with each other and work hard. All pupils make remarkable and accelerating progress as they move through the school so that, by the time they leave, most have attained or exceeded the standards expected nationally and so are very well prepared for the next stage in their education. Most pupils love to come to school: they attend regularly and promptly. Importantly, the school works very hard to help those families who struggle to get their children to school so they are supported,

The school's innovative curriculum is enriched by excellent, productive partnerships with museums, musicians, artists and other centres of cultural excellence. This gives pupils both memorable experiences and an appreciation of intrinsic value. Everything that the school does is aimed at excellent outcomes and is evident in the extraordinary quality of work displayed around the building. Some projects, such as the recent celebration of carnival, embrace the whole community and is a joyful celebration of the shared life that is central to the vision. Pupils are rightly proud of their efforts. This rich curriculum draws on the diversity of the community and pupils learn to appreciate difference and similarity. They grow in character and their horizons are raised. They learn about the wider world and recognise issues of injustice or exploitation. Implementing an inclusive, loving vision underlines a sense of service to others. There are excellent links with the local foodbank, national concerns such as the RNLI and a well-established partnership with a school in Uganda. Visitors from these and other humanitarian concerns have made pupils fierce advocates of change. Pupils say they would like to have a greater say in the causes they support and the actions they take.

The holistic care for the whole school community ensures that there is no room for prejudicial behaviour. Pupils are each valued as God's creation. They learn how to build healthy lives and positive relationships. The school is developing its provision for relationships education so that it meets government requirements when expected to do so. It is implementing Church of England guidance as a step towards it and recognises that there is more work to do. There are excellent systems in place for supporting the mental health of pupils and adults alike and all know that this a place of reconciliation and support. The powerful partnership with the parish church unites school and parish in the service of the

community. The parish priest is recognised and valued by the whole community as a central part of school life, offering support and guidance to any who need it.

Collective worship is the heartbeat of the school, an articulation of its inclusive vision. The rich and varied pattern of worship embraces pupils of all faiths and none and allows them to explore faith, belief and prayer within the context of their own world view. Muslim pupils say that worship helps them to reflect on their own faith and become better Muslims. Nevertheless, worship is deeply Christian and distinctly Anglican. It is carefully and sensitively planned by key staff and clergy and regularly evaluated through discussion with pupils so that they are central to its provision. Since the last inspection, the school has enriched worship by varying its formats to enable pupils to enjoy a range of leaders. Significant responsibility is given to senior pupils in leading the smaller, more personal Circles of Prayer. From the time they join the school, children learn about the importance of faith and the place of prayer. A golden thread of prayer weaves through all of school life. Pupils understand that it is central to a life of faith. They enthusiastically embrace times of prayer for other church schools and say, 'one day, they will pray for us'. This centrality of prayer lifts worship from a mundane liturgy to real opportunities to share and pray for and with each other. There is a strong focus on spiritual development and a shared understanding that spirituality is more than religious observance. This is evident in pupils' mature attitudes to times of wonder, enabling them to see the spiritual dimensions of the wider curriculum.

RE is a core aspect of the school's curriculum, where it contributes to the rich range of learning experiences. Pupils are universally enthusiastic about their learning in RE. The programme of study includes both diocesan and school-developed units to ensure a real depth of coverage. The curriculum meets the expectations of the Church of England's Statement of Entitlement. Pupils study a balance of Christianity and other world faiths, understanding that these are encountered in their own community as well as more widely. RE is expertly led by a skilled and knowledgeable subject leader who draws on excellent support of diocesan officers to lead staff and develop their subject knowledge. The overriding visionary drive for excellent learning means that teachers make the most of every opportunity to ensure that there are many opportunities for pupils to explore their own and others' beliefs. This is a safe space where pupils are encouraged to use the language of faith. As a result, they demonstrate increasing maturity in their thinking and their ability to make connections between philosophies so that RE makes a significant contribution to their overall academic and personal development.



The effectiveness of RE is Excellent

The school correctly judges the quality of teaching and learning in RE to be excellent. Because pupils are well-taught, all flourish academically and make exceptional progress from, often low, starting points. An effective system of assessment ensures that teachers are able to track this progress and structure their teaching so that the majority of pupils attain standards that are in line with those of other core subjects and often higher than those expected locally.

Executive Headteacher

Sarah Bouette

Inspector's name and number

John Viner NS144