

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St. Aidan's Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Albany Road, Stroud Green, London N4 4RR

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	London
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Haringey
Date of inspection	6 December 2017
Date of last inspection	November 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 102132
Headteacher	Anne Etchells
Inspector's name and number	Gill Walley NS 644

School context

This is a one form entry school and nursery with 235 pupils on roll. They come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds including some very deprived groups within the immediate locality. 52% are from minority ethnic backgrounds and 30% have English as an additional language, with some pupils at the very early stages of understanding English. A number of children have significant learning or medical needs. All the major world faiths are represented in the school and a small proportion of families are Christian. They attend various local churches. It has strong links with 3 local churches. The school serves the local community and not all parents have chosen the school because of its Christian character.

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

- Pupils can explain the biblical context of the school's values because they fully understand that they are distinctively Christian. Parents and staff speak highly of the impact of Christian values on the way pupils behave and learn.
- There are strong links with three local churches so that pupils have opportunities to contribute to and learn about different styles of Christian worship.
- Governors are very involved in monitoring and evaluating the Christian distinctiveness and regard it as the school's core purpose.
- Well planned worship, closely linked to the Christian values, develops pupils' spirituality and sense of being part of a Christian family.

Areas to improve

- To create additional opportunities for pupils' spiritual development, including the provision of quiet spaces where they can reflect and be calm.
- Provide parents with more information about the ways in which the Christian values are promoted so that they can discuss and reinforce this with their children at home.

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

The school's work is built on a strong Christian ethos. Everyone in the community respects the Christian values of wisdom, forgiveness, endurance, thankfulness, friendship, hope, creation, peace, service, humility, koinonia and trust. They see them as 'the golden thread' running through their work. These values determine the way the school responds when there are concerns regarding pupils' attendance or behaviour. Pupils generally attend well because they thoroughly enjoy school and always feel cared for, valued as individuals and listened to. They inspire everyone in the community to ensure that every pupil, irrespective of their background or particular needs, reaches his or her full potential academically, personally and with a positive role in society. Pupils can identify Bible stories and passages which set the values in context so that they fully understand that they are Christian. The curriculum is designed to develop pupils' emotional well-being and to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. For example, pupils in Year 6 have been talking about the moral values of Malala Yousafzai and Ruth Valerio. Worship and Religious Education (RE) provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their spirituality, although they would like a place in school where they could reflect and be still in order to develop their spirituality further. They are confident to express their views and respect one another's opinions. There is also extremely good support for those families who find themselves in difficult circumstances, for example, by providing places for their children to attend breakfast club. Vulnerable pupils are given the help they need to succeed and to develop their confidence and self-esteem. Leaders ensure that every pupil has the same opportunities. Consequently all pupils make good progress, they reach high levels of attainment and many exceed what is expected nationally. The diversity of the community is regarded as its key strength, helping pupils to be tolerant and respectful of one another and to prepare for adult life in a multicultural society. The school has strong links with three local churches which encourages pupils to develop a sense of being part of a Christian family. Through these partnerships, pupils have opportunities to serve their local community in various ways, such as helping to prepare for the winter night shelter for homeless people in the area and contributing to the local food bank. Pupils behave extremely well and explain how their understanding of the values helps them in their relationships with one another and their approach to their learning. They are able to take responsibility for the way they behave. Pupils show their concern for those who are less fortunate by raising money for local and national charities and for sponsoring a child in Burkino Faso. This link helps pupils begin to understand Christianity as a world faith. Religious education (RE) lessons are well planned and provide pupils with very good opportunities to develop their understanding of the Christian faith as well as other world faiths, thus contributing well to the school's distinctive Christian character. A Bible club is provided so that pupils can attend if they wish to learn more. They are reminded of the school's Christian distinctiveness through the displays of symbols as well as Bible stories throughout the building and Christian faith boards in classrooms. One board is devoted to the Christian value which is in focus and this helps to remind pupils of the ways in which they can demonstrate this value to others.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.

To help pupils fully understand and live out the Christian values, each one is used as the theme for worship for several weeks. The Christian values are also linked to special events, such as the value of peace which was explored on Remembrance Day and during Anti-bullying week. School staff, parish workers and visiting clergy from the local churches plan together so that worship is relevant, meaningful and meets statutory requirements. Worship is monitored well and evaluated so that leaders can be sure it always meets the pupils' needs and interests. Worship is engaging and visual and pupils enjoy answering questions to show how well they understand the Bible stories and passages they have heard. Worship is greatly enriched by the exceptional quality of the singing and musical interludes. Pupils say the music helps them to be calm and to 'tune in'. They 'love listening to Bible stories' and learning about the Christian faith. They understand the church calendar and the liturgical colours, and they celebrate saints' days to broaden their understanding of Christianity. Worship focuses on the centrality of Christ and His position in the Christian faith. Pupils also understand the concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit because it has been explained to them in a visual way. Resources and drama are used well to make the key messages clear and to involve pupils in an active way. For example, during Advent a jar of muddy water was used to demonstrate how we can feel more at peace and closer to God when we are calm and still. Christian greetings are used at the beginning and the end of each act of worship so that pupils remember that they are in God's presence. Several local ministers lead worship regularly and this means pupils experience range of styles. The core purpose of worship is to develop pupils' spirituality through prayer and reflection, collectively and individually. They are invited to engage with prayer and worship in whatever way feels right for them, and to think about how what they are sharing relates to the decisions they make at school and at home. Pupils are very involved in planning and leading acts of worship, and in writing and leading the prayers. Leaders also involve them in evaluating worship by seeking their views and encouraging them to explain how they can demonstrate a value in their interactions with other people. Leaders respond well to pupils' and parents' feedback. They have also responded to the last inspection report and pupils now have a better understanding of the liturgy in worship and join in with the responses and lighting of candles.

Classes often visit the parish church to learn about symbols, the sacraments and worship, and they and their families look forward to coming together to celebrate or acknowledge.

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

The headteacher promotes a strong Christian vision based on the belief that each child is valued as a child of God. As a result of this vision, the school seeks to enable every pupil to develop their full potential, both pastorally and academically. This underpins the school's work in all respects. Staff follow her example and promote the Christian vision extremely well. They and governors identify the impact the Christian distinctiveness has on pupils' lives and the progress they make at the school. The school has responded well to the recommendations of the last inspection report. Governors are now more aware of the quality worship and the extent of pupils' spiritual development. They are very involved in monitoring and evaluating the Christian distinctiveness and as a result this has strengthened considerably in recent years. They and school leaders have taken advantage of training from the diocese to help them develop the Christian distinctiveness. The 'care and communication' committee is constantly looking at ways to develop this further. Governors have given thought to succession planning so that promoting the Christian distinctiveness remains the school's core purpose. Leaders are relentless in developing the strengths of the school. They are now providing more enrichment for pupils, for example in developing the school grounds so that they can experience awe and wonder in their environment. The RE leader has had an extremely strong impact in developing and resourcing an engaging curriculum, and with initiatives such as Faith Week. This has resulted in RE making a very significant contribution to the school's Christian distinctiveness and to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Staff feel very well supported in understanding how to promote the Christian distinctiveness and how to develop the pupils' understanding of the values in a Christian context. Links with local churches enrich pupils' understanding of the Christian faith and are mutually beneficial. Parents feel that the school embeds Christian values extremely well but also shows profound respect for those pupils and families who regard the basis of these values as moral rather than theological. They say the school 'feels like a village', 'with everyone knowing and caring about one another'. They find the school very welcoming and tolerant of everyone's beliefs and traditions. Parents feel the Christian distinctiveness has strengthened in recent years and is now at its heart. They would appreciate knowing what value is in focus at any one time, in newsletters and on the website, so that they could discuss it with their children at home.

SIAMS report December 2017 St. Aidan's CE Primary School Albany Road Stroud Green London N4 4RR