

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St John's Angell Town Church of England Primary School

85 Angell Road, Brixton, London SW9 7HH

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Diocese

Southwark

Previous SIAS inspection grade

Outstanding

Local authority

Lambeth

Date of inspection

17 March 2017

Date of last inspection

February 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

Voluntary Aided 100615

Headteacher

Martin Clark

Inspector's name and number

Shaun Burns 808

School context

St John's is an average-sized school with nursery situated in the inner-city area of Brixton. The school deprivation indicator is twice the national average mirrored by the number of pupils eligible for free school meals. The numbers of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are three times the national average. Those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities are also above average. Since the last inspection the incumbent has become chair of governors. The school has been rebuilt with the new building opening this year. Ninety percent of pupils are Christians of various denominations with the other ten percent being Muslims or Hindus.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St John's Angell Town as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The deep Christian welcome, love and generosity that run throughout the school in which every member of the school community is cherished and can flourish as a child of God.
- The generous Christian heart of the school reaches out and cares for those in need, locally, nationally and internationally, strongly influencing the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of all pupils.
- The symbiotic relationship between the school and the parish church which benefits each other enormously, the school being seen as an integral part of the church's vocational mission in Angell Town.
- All leaders unite to both strongly promote and consistently live out a Christian vision, rooted in distinctive Gospel values, which underpins every aspect of life at St. John's.
- The school leads pupils to understand the value of personal prayer and reflection; consequently pupils take this into their own lives, impacting upon their own personal spirituality.

Areas to improve

- Consistently provide creative opportunities to enable pupils to develop and express a deeper level of understanding in Religious Education (RE).
- Ensure self-evaluation of the school's performance becomes more accurate, leading to sharply focused strategies for improvement which result in the needs of all learners being met.
- Review the school's strap line so that it more explicitly reflects the school's strong Christian mission and character.

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

St John's Angell Town is a beacon of light and Christian hope to the school community that it serves. It knows its school community really well. This includes understanding the context of its families and the many challenges that they face day by day. A Christian conviction to serve shapes the school fulfilling its responsibility to positively meet the needs of all learners. This is in the firm belief and aspiration that the school can change the lives of those it is responsible for. It does this through living out its Mission Statement, "learning to make the world a better place." "We respond to human need by loving service" explains the school.

Although not explicitly reflected in the mission statement strapline, the school unwaveringly lives by distinctively Christian values. These inform and shape all that goes on in the school and, as a result, overcomes barriers that impinge on learning. All members of the school community attribute the school's Christian nature in supporting it to conquer crises and difficult times. A parent shared that if it were not for the school, "I wouldn't be who I am today."

Over time, pupils generally achieve well. Despite academic achievements for particular groups having not been as strong recently, effective targeted interventions have been put into place. There is evidence that pupils are now making rapid progress. This demonstrates the school commitment to enabling all pupils to flourish in their God-given potential.

The school encourages pupils to take responsibility towards others. Through work with London Citizens and being a founder member of Loughborough Junction Citizens, the school has supported refugees locally. Pupils have also shown Christian hospitality by taking part in a local Refugee Peace Walk, flying kites they made containing prayers of welcome. Pupils spoke to the Local Authority, Parliament and the Faith and Community Assembly about the cause. This is developing pupils' understanding of Christian social action for the common good and contributes significantly to the SMSC of all pupils. "We want pupils to be affected by the issues of the world" says the head teacher.

The school is a reflective community and humble in its service. A shared understanding of spirituality manifests itself through opportunities for its development. Reflective areas encourage spiritual growth as do lessons and other experiences offered to pupils. Refocused residential school journeys enable pupils to benefit from experiences promoting appreciation of God's world and touching the spirituality of participants. This is supported by RE which pupils are challenged by and enjoy. The subject clearly contributes to building the Christian nature of the school.

By showing nurture towards flower tubs and gardening in the local community garden, the school develops understanding of qualities needed for oneself and for others. This results in improved behaviour and readiness for learning. "We work to safeguard God's creation" says the school.

Attendance is shaped by the Christian character of the school, leaders believing that good attendance is needed for potential to be fulfilled. This results in effective strategies being put in place to address any case where pupils had not attended so well. Similarly the desire to meet an individual's needs informs extremely rare exclusions. School rules building six pillars of character arise from God's rules for living and lead to standards of behaviour being high. The Christian personality of the school results in warm, cohesive and supportive relationships between all. Built firmly on the teachings of Jesus Christ, these focus on achieving the best for the community. "It's beautiful!" said a Year 4 pupil.

Cultural roots of the school community are embraced. These, along with supporting a Zimbabwean school, lead pupils to develop awareness of Christianity as a multicultural world faith. The school is strong in promoting equality in its widest sense. This develops pupils who have high level of understanding and respect towards diversity within the church and also other faiths.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Across the school, great value is placed on Collective Worship as the bedrock of school life. Its impact is clearly articulated and felt by all members of the school community. "It makes me bond with God somehow," said a Year 6 pupil.

Various leaders including the incumbent, head teacher and local Pentecostal minister give pupils a rich experience of worship. Weekly worship takes place in the parish church enriching daily worship held in school. Relevant aspirational themes challenge pupils to reflect morally and spiritually, responding through faith in their daily lives. The Haven is a prayer room, permanently open and well-used by adults and pupils. It offers space and encourages reflection and prayer by all faiths, alone or together. Facilities for writing prayers are provided around school, the prayers are later shared in acts of worship. The school's priority given to intercession has developed within pupils the desire to offer life to God in prayer. This has been 'caught' by others; a parent reported how her child had taught her siblings and her how to pray. An attention to providing opportunities for nurturing individual and shared spirituality in all develops a reflective and prayerful community. Collective Worship inspires a deepening understanding of the Christian faith whilst being inclusive for all faiths, resulting in no withdrawals. The Bible is always shared in worship, illustrating Christian teaching. This results in pupils relating guidance from the Bible to

how they are called to live their lives. Worship sets out the Christian framework to the school's values. This gives the school community the faith context which they live by. There is a strong focus on Jesus Christ, building learners' understanding of his centrality in Christianity. Anglican liturgy familiarises pupils with Anglican features of worship. During the inspection, the act of Collective Worship challenged the school community to consider influence. The incumbent linked St. Patrick's use of the shamrock with The Trinity. This further enhanced the good understanding already evident by pupils. The Christian calendar is celebrated with worship. e.g. the Christmas worship having the theme of refuge and linking in with the topical theme of refugees. The school has invited local refugee families that the area has welcomed to its Easter Service. This places worship at the heart of the school, bringing a relevance to worship and context for linking Christian social action. From their experiences of worship, pupils learn to confidently plan and lead it, supporting their development of worship skills. An effective monitoring and evaluation system involving different stakeholders is organised and its findings are analysed by the School Council. This informs the Faith Group on the impact of worship and suggests future developments.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

RE has a strong place at St John's and is valued as a core contributor to the distinctiveness of the school. The school's RE policy now reflects this following its recent review. This was an area for development from the previous inspection. Assessment procedures involving various methods are used to inform planning, teaching and learning. These show standards of attainment and progress for most pupils are in line with national expectations and sometimes higher. All pupils make good progress from their starting points. They show a particularly secure knowledge of Christianity and of other faiths studied. This leads to a deep understanding of the Christian values of the school whilst becoming informed and learning to respect other faiths. This has successfully addressed another area of development from the last inspection. A lesson in Year 1 reflecting the Christian season of Lent explored the concept of Salvation. Through the voluntary giving-up by a pupil of his chocolate bar to another child without one, foundations were laid for understanding this key Christian belief.

The school's effective monitoring procedures show that the majority of teaching is good. The RE curriculum enables pupils to develop a range of RE-specific skills. These include deep reflective writing that reflected on life gone by. However this openness and greater depth is not consistently provided for in all lessons. As a result, pupils are not always afforded the opportunity to demonstrate their creativity and uniqueness. They are not always able to apply learning to show reflection on questions of meaning and purpose informed by faith. However the subject impacts positively upon the SMSC of pupils, providing a context for depth of response.

A passionate and dedicated RE Subject Leader leads the subject well. She effectively and supportively shares expectations with other senior leaders, staff and governors about improvements and ambition for RE. She has been a member of the local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education, keeping up to date on developments in RE. She uses results of the monitoring and evaluation of the subject to inform future development leading to increased pupil achievement.

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

Leaders set the tone for the school's strong, deeply embedded Christian distinctiveness. They are inspirational in their articulation of the impact of the school's explicit Christian values on the life of pupils and families. The Faith Group is proactive in developing the faith experience of the school. This ensures that it is an anchor for the whole character of the school. "We look through the lens of Christian values," said one governor.

Self-evaluation is informed by all parts of the school community. Although this has not been sharp enough on all aspects of the school's effectiveness recently, an increase in rigour is informing more accurate insightfulness. This is resulting in improved attainment by all groups of pupils. It has become more closely focused on analysis leading to the implementation of effective improvement strategies. Self-evaluation keeps central the focus on meeting the needs of all learners. Accurate self-evaluation of the school's distinctiveness enables the school to ambitiously grow in doing God's work amongst its community.

In its distinctive Christian vision for the curriculum, the school provides a richness of experiences to enhance the life of every pupil. This supports the encouragement of high moral behaviour and positive attitudes within pupils. Opportunities are sought to promote SMSC and links made to support emotional development.

Engagement with partners such as parents, church and community brings mutual and substantial benefit. This develops responsibility and understanding of local, national and global communities. Continuing professional development supports the development of staff and governors as church school leaders. This has helped them grow in effectiveness, resulting in better all-round provision for pupils. High priority given to the leadership of RE and Worship results in very good practice. The school's powerful Christian character develops resilience, sustains the community and gives the unwavering hope which surrounds and delivers the school's mission statement.