



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Mary's CE Primary School

Quex Road
London
NW6 4PG

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Diocese: London

Local authority: Camden

Dates of inspection: 30 September 2015

Date of last inspection: May 2011

School's unique reference number: 100042

Headteacher: Juliet Jackson (Executive), Clare Dyson (Head of School)

Inspector's name and number: John Viner NS144

School context

St Mary's is an average sized primary school with a nursery, located in Kilburn and serving the joint parishes of St Mary with All Souls, Kilburn and St James, West Hampstead. Its 224 pupils reflect the rich diversity of the area with the majority belonging to minority ethnic groups. Around two-thirds speak English as an additional language. About a quarter of pupils attend a church while the remainder come from a variety of backgrounds of faith and belief. A well above average proportion of pupils is eligible for additional government funding. Since 2013 the school has undergone significant change and is now part of a federation with two Roman Catholic primary schools. These share an Executive Headteacher but each has its own governing body and Head of School. Standards are rapidly rising and, at the end of Key Stage 2 are now above the national average. In November 2014 the school was judged by Ofsted to be good.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Mary's Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The school's motto, 'go shine in the world' and the Christian values that support it are lived out in every aspect of its work.
- A golden thread of prayer and worship is woven through the fabric of the school's life, enriching the spiritual personalities of both adults and pupils.
- Because they know they are safe, valued and special, pupils enjoy school, make good progress and achieve high standards.
- The strong partnership with the parish church benefits the whole community.

Areas to improve

- Review the Religious Education (RE) curriculum so that pupils learn about world faiths in a more progressive way and teachers are better able to plan lessons that meet the needs of all pupils.

- Build on the good practice in the school to ensure that all teachers' marking helps pupils to understand better how to extend their thinking in RE.

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

Since the last inspection the school has identified seven core Christian values that define its work. From their earliest experience of school, pupils are introduced to these values and to the school's motto, 'go shine in the world'. They quickly learn how these values apply to their lives and how they might show that they 'shine'. From the youngest to the oldest, pupils know that they have a relationship with God and a responsibility towards each other. The impact of this is that the school is a caring community defined by excellent relationships between and among adults and pupils. The shared commitment to the promotion of these values supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils so that they develop a real sense of spirituality, know the right way to behave and acquire attitudes of tolerance and respect. Pupils enjoy coming to school: they attend regularly, work hard and behave well. As a result, they make good, and often rapid, progress, attaining academic levels that are above expectations. Because the school serves a richly diverse area, care is taken to affirm pupils from all backgrounds, of faith or no faith. They understand that Christianity is a world faith and their friendships reflect this. They are rightly proud of their happy school. Staff say that they are proud to work here and parents say that this is a school where their children not only learn well but where they develop into good, caring people through the values that they acquire. Pupils say that religious education (RE) is among the many things they love about the school and understand that it is an important aspect of the school's Christian character.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is central to the school's life. Although worshipful assemblies take place daily, they are only part of an ongoing expression of prayer that is woven through the school. It begins and ends each school day and forms the foundation of pupils' religious experience. From the moment they join the school they learn the nature and purpose of prayer, gain in prayerful confidence and contribute to the life of the school in worship. Pupils universally say how much they look forward to worship. They learn the personal nature of prayer and like the opportunities they have to commit their prayerful thoughts to God through the 'prayer leaves'. These are used in worship and displayed on the central prayer tree. There are many good opportunities for pupils to reflect and pray, both in worship and privately. The daily Christian meditation provides pupils with an opportunity to meet with God in silent reflection. Many pupils say that this is their favourite part of the day – 'a time when I can clear my mind and think clearly'. Parents remark on the impact this has on their children's behaviour at home. The daily act of collective worship takes place in a variety of forms, sometimes as the whole school, sometimes in key stages and sometimes in classes, where it is deeply personal. Worship is a time for reinforcing the Christian values that the school promotes. Through it, adults and pupils are affirmed, regardless of their faith or belief. Worship is Biblical and, through it, pupils develop an understanding of the person of Jesus and of the Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The regular use of the mass, both in school and in the parish church, engages them with Anglican tradition and practice. Parents of all faiths say they like the times when they can also attend mass. Worship is carefully planned by leaders and clergy and it is led by a variety of leaders, including the parish priest. This variety keeps it fresh and interesting. Pupils engage with worship enthusiastically and enjoy the many regular opportunities they have to take part. They pray confidently and sing enthusiastically. Worship is thoroughly and regularly evaluated and all stakeholders have a voice. This evaluation is instrumental in driving further development and planned improvement.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Since the last inspection there have been many positive changes to the RE curriculum but there has not yet been time for them to be embedded. Nevertheless, pupils make very good

progress in RE, often from a low base, and the standards they achieve are in line with other subjects. RE is given an important place in the school's curriculum so that pupils understand that it is as important as other core subjects. Pupils enjoy RE and many recall lessons that stand out for them. They develop a very secure knowledge and understanding of Christianity. The recent introduction of class Bibles is helping them to become familiar with its layout and content. Teachers have high expectations that, as they move through the school, pupils will be able to include scripture references in their work. Although much teaching is of a high standard, the overall quality is variable. Sometimes this is because lessons are over-planned and do not always focus on what is most important so that the work does not always meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers' marking, although encouraging, does not always identify clearly enough how pupils can apply their learning. The school's programme of study covers a wide range of religions in addition to Christianity but the curriculum is not yet well balanced so that some coverage is superficial and, by the time they leave the school, pupils do not always know the key facts that they should. Pupils say that they would like to know more about other faiths but the present arrangements fragment their experience. RE is well led by a knowledgeable and experienced coordinator who is ably supported by the school leaders and by the parish priest. She has played an important role in driving the recent improvements and developing teachers' subject knowledge.

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

Recent changes to the school's leadership have strengthened its effectiveness and many aspects are now excellent. The school leaders and governors share and articulate a clear and ambitious Christian vision for the school that is evident in the raised standards that pupils achieve and the deep commitment to the school's Christian distinctiveness. The impact of the recently adopted Christian values on the school community is plain to see. However, these improvements are in their early stages, with further development being required in RE. A new leader is shortly to assume responsibility for RE. Although she is inexperienced, she is being well-prepared by her predecessor. The wellbeing of the whole school community is effectively promoted through the dynamic leadership of the executive Headteacher and her fellow leaders. They share responsibility for securing the school's strategic direction through effective planning and self-evaluation, rooted in their Christian faith. They have a clear and purposeful plan for the school's continued effectiveness as a Church school. Governors know the school well and work with its leaders to keep the school's Christian distinctiveness under review. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school; they respect the leaders and trust their judgement. Leadership is significantly enhanced by the formal partnership with the two Catholic primary schools, allowing expertise to be shared. As a result there is considerable added capacity in planning for leadership succession. There is a strong and effective partnership with the local church that is of mutual benefit to the school and the families it serves. The parish priest works closely with the senior leaders to build the prayer and worshipping life of the school. Parents speak warmly of the way that the parish and school work together. Both church and school provide after-school clubs for the pupils and the school's Learning Mentor runs the church's strong Sunday School. Together church and school support good causes locally and in the wider world. The school is effectively supported by diocesan officers so that it is well positioned for further improvement as it faces the future as a dynamic church school.

SIAMS report September 2015 St Mary's CE Primary School, Kilburn NW6 4PG