



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Mary's Church of England School

Fowler Road

London

NI 2EP

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: London

Local authority: Islington

Date of inspection: 17 March 2016

Date of last inspection: July 2011

School's unique reference number: 100446

Headteacher: Genevieve Prayag

Inspector's name and number: Jayne Pavlou 628

School context

St Mary's Church of England School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above the national average, although the number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is roughly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average and the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well-above average. The school is linked with three parish churches within the local area, however only a small number of pupils regularly attend Church. The school has recently started to support a neighbouring school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Mary's as a Church of England school are good

- The value placed upon each individual, along with the provision of a nurturing and supportive learning environment positively impacts the achievement of the 'whole' child.
- The provision made available for pupils to grow and develop as leaders equips them to become responsible members of their own school community and beyond.
- The wide range of experiences pupils are given to encourage their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development positively impacts their behaviour and attitude towards one another.
- The partnerships with the three link churches make a positive contribution to the school's Christian ethos.

Areas to improve

- To develop systems which enable Governors to take a more active and formal role in monitoring and evaluating the school as a church school, so that developments are explicitly driven by the school's Christian foundation.
- To fully equip the Religious Education (RE) leader in her role by placing a greater priority on training and developing subject expertise.
- To improve the standards in teaching and learning across the school in RE by ensuring all pupils are appropriately supported and challenged to enable them to make strong and rapid progress within the subject.

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

The school is proud to be a Church of England school and is committed to living out its Christian foundation. It has adopted the Biblical fruits of the spirit to form the school's core Christian values of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Pupils are encouraged to demonstrate the fruits of the spirit in the way they conduct themselves and this is acknowledged and celebrated during their weekly 'celebration' assembly. This, along with the positive role modelling provided by the Headteacher and staff team, results in pupils displaying exemplary behaviour towards one another. High priority is given to developing pupils as leaders. The 'Young Leaders Scheme' introduces pupils to the roles and responsibilities of leadership which helps to prepare them to become responsible citizens. All members of the school community thrive in this nurturing and caring environment and this is reflected in their academic success. Overall achievement is strong and shows rapid improvement over time. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and the staff team works hard to engage with families. As a result attendance figures have steadily improved and are now in line with the national average. Great value is placed on each member of the whole school community. Religious Education provides pupils with opportunities to discuss similarities and differences between the different faiths represented in this diverse school community and this has created a culture where pupils show a high level of respect for one another and their beliefs. For example, when speaking about a tapestry located in the main corridor of the school, representing the faiths and cultures reflected in the school community, one pupil explained how 'the school doesn't discriminate against our faiths' and how 'it respects my beliefs'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely well supported through both the rich curriculum on offer to pupils and through their daily act of worship.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is central to school life and makes a positive impact upon the day to day running of the school. This was summarised well by one clergy member who explained how 'worship filters through into other things they [the pupils] do'. Worship is jointly planned by the Headteacher and clergy. Themes include the school's Christian values and the key Christian festivals which are celebrated in Church throughout the year. The school is very well supported by representatives from all three churches they are linked with including clergy members and a children's and youth minister. As a result pupils develop a secure knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith including an age appropriate understanding of more complex Christian beliefs such as that of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Parents too appreciate the support and visible presence of the clergy and children's and youth minister. During their daily act of worship, pupils are given regular opportunities to pause and reflect upon Biblical teaching which often results in practical acts of service to others within the school and beyond. One such example involved pupils choosing to show acts of kindness to those sleeping on the steps of the church by collecting food for the food bank. Worship is specifically Christian but it is also inclusive of the whole school community. One clergy member described it as being 'authentically Christian but allowing children of other faiths to flourish'. Prayer is an important part of school life and is naturally woven throughout the school day. Regular opportunities for both personal and collective prayer are given. Careful consideration has been given to secure a rich learning environment which encourages pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The 'Young Leaders' enthusiastically shared examples of how their experience of worship has been improved as a direct result of senior leaders listening and responding to their views and comments. Governors do occasionally attend worship both in school and in Church, although they do not yet formally contribute to the monitoring process.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious Education has a high profile within the school and pupils clearly enjoy the subject. Standards of attainment are generally in line with national expectations with most pupils working within the expected level. Teaching in RE is good and sometimes better. Where teaching is best, the work is appropriately pitched and carefully planned, providing challenge and support to meet the differing needs of the pupils. However not all pupils are sufficiently supported and challenged to attain and achieve as highly as they could. As a result, pupils do not consistently make as much progress as they could in the subject. Teachers and leaders have worked hard to address the issues from the previous inspection. The marking of pupils' work not only affirms what has been done well, but also poses relevant questions in order to extend pupils' thinking. Effective planning and good teaching enables pupils to develop a broad and accurate religious vocabulary. The RE curriculum makes a very strong contribution to both the school's Christian values and the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The teaching of Christianity is effective and this is evident in the pupils' secure knowledge of the Christian faith. The curriculum provides a good balance between helping pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding and also to reflect on the significance of religion in the world today. However it does not always provide staff with sufficient background information to support and develop their own subject knowledge. The subject leader has rightly identified the need to review the RE curriculum and to provide staff with appropriate training to extend their subject knowledge. The Diocesan adviser has worked effectively with the RE leader developing robust monitoring systems which have clearly led to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning in RE since the last inspection. Additional engagement with Governors in monitoring and evaluating the subject would help to further improve standards.

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

Leaders ensure that all members of the school community are clear that St Mary's is a Church school. All members of the school community speak positively about belonging to this Church school and readily give examples of how they benefit from being part of this tight knit community, regardless of any personal belief. The school's strap line 'together we aspire and believe, together we achieve' is known and understood by most members of the school community. This vision, underpinned by the outworking of the school's Christian values, creates a nurturing and supportive learning environment in which pupils and adults flourish. Senior leaders have a good understanding of all aspects of the school which ensures high standards of achievement and well-being are maintained. Although Governors regularly visit the school and are involved in elements of self-evaluation, they do not yet formally engage in a systematic review of the school as a Church school. The Headteacher recognises the importance of equipping senior leaders to work successfully in a Church school and as a result leaders have benefited from Diocesan training. Further support for the RE leader would maximise opportunities for the school to keep abreast of the national landscape in RE. The school has worked extremely hard to establish and develop strong partnerships with the parental body of the school and have successfully deepened the level of engagement with parents in order to support pupils' learning. This has had a very positive impact on narrowing the gaps in pupil attainment. Strong and effective partnerships are also enjoyed between the three parish churches. The support provided by the clergy members and the children's and youth minister make a significant contribution to the Christian distinctiveness within the school. In recent months the Local Authority has approached the school inviting them to partner and support another local school within the neighbourhood. This is a further reflection of the school's willingness to serve and support the wider community.