

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Mary's CE Primary School

Amyand Park Road, Twickenham, TW1 3HE

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: London

Local authority: Richmond-upon-Thames

Date of inspection: 9 February 2016

Date of last inspection: 8 February 2011

School's unique reference number: 102914

Headteacher: Stuart Campbell

Inspector's name and number: John Viner 144

School context

St Mary's is a larger than average primary school situated on three sites and serving the parish of St Mary's Church, Twickenham. The majority of its 630 pupils are drawn from the immediate area. A small proportion regularly attend church. A lower than average proportion of pupils are eligible for additional government funding. Although there is a specialist unit on site for pupils with communication difficulties, the overall composition of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities is below average. Around a third of pupils speak English as an additional language, although few are at the early stages. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are well above the national average. The school was graded as outstanding by Ofsted in 2011.

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

- The Christian values, which the school promotes, are evident in every aspect of the school's work and in the excellent relationships between and among adults and learners.
- Worship is central to the life of the school, provide a common link between the three school sites and unite the school in a prayerful community.
- Pupils attain high standards in Religious Education (RE) and develop excellent attitudes of tolerance and respect.
- The threefold partnership between the school, the parish church and St Mary's Trust enhances and enriches the Christian life of the school.
- The inspirational Christian leadership of the headteacher and the shared commitment of leaders and governors and chaplain are sustaining a culture that blends compassion with excellence.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that, when pupils leave the school, they know the key facts of the main faiths and so are well-prepared for life in modern Britain.

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

This is a place where Christian values, faith and belief underpin every aspect of work and life. These Christian values, clearly and thoughtfully chosen to reflect the school's mission and purpose, are clearly expressed by pupils, lived out by staff and appreciated by parents, irrespective of their faith. In living out its mission 'to grow and learn together, inspired by Jesus' love', the school secures high standards so that all pupils make excellent progress from their starting points and many achieve extraordinarily high levels of attainment. Through the school's profound understanding of its pupils and sincere commitment to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, its pupils acquire a deep sense of their own spirituality. They develop confidence to ask insightful questions about life, faith and purpose. Pupils clearly understand that here, they are safe, valued and special and they readily state that, irrespective of faith, they are all God's children. As a result, they are keen to come to school, work hard and behave impeccably. Relationships between and among adults and learners are rich, fulfilling and trusting. Pupils recognise this and say that this is a place where 'we are open to everybody, as Jesus was'. Parents too acknowledge the impact that, through living out its Christian values, they can see the positive impact that the school has on their children's lives. They report that their children are proud of their school. Pupils say how much they enjoy the diversity that they see in school and, whatever their faith, they report that they are excited about Religious Education because they get to learn about all religions in the context of understanding that Christianity is a world faith. Because of this they develop positive values of tolerance and respect and so are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship has a special place in the life of the school and, in many ways, worship and prayer are the golden threads that unite each part of the school in a common purpose, weaving it into a cohesive school community. On each site, worship is a core part of every day and pupils say that it is a time that 'brings us together as a school and reminds us that we are all God's children'. Worship is uncompromisingly Christian and Anglican, where the person of Jesus is at the centre and God is acknowledged as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, all pupils feel affirmed and valued and say that worship helps them to reflect on their own faith and relate the key messages of worship to their own lives. All are comfortable in joining with the carefully crafted school creed, which reaffirms their commitment to the school community and their own spiritual journey. Worship is structured around the Christian values that the school promotes. All teachers contribute to planning and leading both school worship and those well-attended services that take place in the parish church. Great care is taken by leaders to ensure that every act of worship is planned thoroughly and is of the highest quality. Worship is regularly led by the headteacher, deputy head and chaplain and is often enriched by a range of visitors, including governors. The chaplain adds significant capacity to the worship team and plays a key role in deepening pupils' spiritual awareness. In particular, his willingness to engage with the often deep and challenging questions that pupils ask, gives them confidence to question and grow in faith. Pupils say that they hear stories in worship but the chaplain 'takes us deeper'. There are many good opportunities for pupils to take part in many aspects of worship, which includes reading prayers they have written. Pupils quickly learn the nature and purpose of prayer and use the classroom reflection areas as a focus for their thoughts. They know that prayer and reflection are important to their development as spiritual beings. The school supports this development with the provision of prayer boxes, where pupils and adults can post their personal prayers or questions. There is a prayer tree on each site, which provides opportunities for pupils to record their public prayers. Prayer is used in classes at the end of each day so that there is an appreciation of its importance. Governors are involved in worship, sometimes through leading acts of worship but particularly through the monitoring work of the Ethos Committee, which takes the views of pupils into account and ensures that worship is always fresh and developing.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Standards of attainment in RE are very high in comparison with national expectations. Pupils make excellent progress from their starting points and secure deep learning about key concepts. Teachers know their pupils well and they ensure that their progress is not measured against other subjects but against their knowledge of Christianity and a broad range of religious faiths, coupled with an appreciation that religion impacts on people's lives, including their own. Pupils say that they look forward to RE because teachers make it fun and they learn a lot. Teachers are well-supported by the expertise of the chaplain. Because of the good and sometimes outstanding teaching they receive, pupils acquire confidence in skills of enquiry and reflection, which they use to good effect. Their responses, ideas and questions are often impressive in their depth and maturity. They evaluate their learning against what they understand of human nature and develop a deep appreciation of the relevance of faith in a modern world. The RE curriculum is carefully structured around a broad range of world faiths, set about a core of Christianity. Pupils quickly develop a foundational understanding of faith and key concepts of faith, such as prayer and worship. They say that they like learning about different faiths, cultures and traditions and make mature judgements about differences and similarities between religions. They develop a secure understanding of Christianity and the Bible and this gives them a confidence to explore other faiths. St Mary's Trust's gift of a Bible to Year 3 pupils helps to underline its importance. The rich RE curriculum provides excellent opportunities to explore religions in a mature, considered manner. By the time they leave the school, pupils have a secure understanding of the importance of faith, a good knowledge of Christianity and an appreciation of other faiths. However, they are not always clear about the key features of the main world faiths. The leadership of RE is characterised by rigorous monitoring, coupled with high levels of training and support from the knowledgeable coordinator. The subject is excellently resourced with relevant artefacts. The experienced subject leader is now working with her successor to ensure that there is a planned succession of leadership and that progression and development in RE is sustained.

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

The personal faith of the headteacher, his inspirational leadership and clarity of thinking are echoed in the ambitious Christian vision for the school that is shared by leaders and governors. Together they consistently live out this vision as an example to the school. Staff unite behind this vision and express great confidence in the headteacher, leaders and governors. Parents and pupils respect the leaders, value their guidance and trust their judgement. Leaders and governors know the school well and there are excellent, rigorous systems for keeping the school's Christian identity under review. This involves the views of all stakeholders so that it is not static but is a dynamic and living strategy, responsive to changing needs and well-prepared for change. They have well-developed plans for the future leadership of the school at all levels and have recently appointed a respected leader of another diocesan school to take over when the headteacher retires. Leaders and governors ensure that the school's distinctive Christian values shine through its curriculum, its policies and in the community that they have built. This is reflected in the national recognition of the excellent work of the governing body and the school's recent national award for its support of disadvantaged pupils. There is a strong partnership with the St Mary's Trust, which plays a key role in supporting the school's Christian development. It is the Trust that appointed and now funds the school's chaplain. This has added hugely to the school's capacity to support staff, pupils and families. Leadership of worship and RE is given a high priority and leads to exemplary practice. The strong partnership with the parish church benefits all members of the community and parents say how much they welcome it, especially the combined involvement of the parish priest and the school chaplain. Through their example, pupils understand how Christian compassion is demonstrated in the support of a number of local, national and global charities, which are mutually beneficial. As governors state, 'St Mary's builds community', and this is its strength.

SIAMS report February 2016 St Mary's CE primary School, Twickenham TW1 3HE