

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### Trinity St Mary's CE Primary School

6 Balham Park Road London SW12 8DR

**Current SIAMS inspection grade**

**GOOD**

**Diocese**

**SOUTHWARK**

Previous SIAS inspection grade

Outstanding

Local authority

Wandsworth

Dates of inspection

27 and 28 April 2017

Date of last inspection

26 June 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

Voluntary Aided 101047

Headteacher

Lynn Anderson

Inspector's name and number

Andrew Redman 789

#### School context

Trinity St Mary's is a small primary school serving a diverse population in the heart of Balham. The proportions of learners eligible for Free School Meals and from minority ethnic group are significantly above the national average as is the proportion learning English as a second language. The headteacher was appointed to the substantive post in April 2017 having served in an acting capacity since September 2016. Although the school has been through a period of turbulence with considerable staff changes, a recent OfSTED report (March 2017) noted that a good quality of education had been maintained since the last inspection. There is currently an interregnum at St Mary's Church but a new incumbent will be in post from September.

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

- Clearly distinctive and shared Christian values that underpin and guide the daily life of the school are lived out by all members of the school community.
- Real unity in the local school and church community has ensured that, during a period of significant turbulence, the school has continued to maintain and develop a good quality of education and its distinctive Christian character.
- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school; it is highly valued by staff, pupils and parents and enriches their spiritual lives.
- The school is highly inclusive; pupils and their families have developed an undeniable understanding and respect towards other Christians and those of other faiths.

#### Areas to improve

- Ensure that learning activities in Religious Education (RE) provide fully for the needs of all learners and, in particular, for the more able pupils.
- Ensure the Faith group provides a more formalised system to enable senior leaders and governors to monitor and evaluate the impact of all elements of the school's Christian distinctiveness.

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

Trinity St Mary's has an outstanding Christian and inclusive family ethos. Pupils were instrumental in developing the school's core values of kindness, unity and courage and one child explained that 'it's what we are all about.' This is quite clearly true of all members of the school community who not only articulate these shared values, but live them out in their daily lives. The distinctive Christian character of the school shines through and relationships between all members of the school community are consequently very strong; this has been a key factor in the successful induction of new staff. This sense of unity has ensured that, during a period of significant turbulence and whilst the local church awaits the arrival of a new priest, the school has continued to move onwards and upwards. The school is a vibrant Christian family; one parent noted that she 'felt the spirituality' in the school when she arrived. Senior leaders live out their faith and Christian vision on a daily basis. As a result, pupils feel safe and supported and consequently flourish in a school they love.

Regardless of an individual's denomination, faith or belief, every pupil is valued to the full and the majority make rapid progress. Detailed analysis ensures that the school has a secure understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. This relentless focus on the individual has ensured that attainment is high and above national expectations. Attendance is above the national average and exclusions are rare. Pupils clearly articulate clear links between the lessons learned from biblical teaching and they think deeply about their behaviours and relationships, often reflecting on 'what would Jesus do?' in moments of need. Consequently, high standards of behaviour and positive attitudes to learning are evident across the whole school. The well-established behaviour policy is grounded in the school's mission statement which is complemented by the UNICEF Rights Respecting School's Charter. This framework effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; one parent explained that these embedded opportunities for self-reflection 'help the children how to deal with life's tough questions.'

RE is well planned and makes a significant contribution to the Christian character of Trinity St Mary's. Pupils have developed an undeniable understanding and respect towards other Christians and other faiths. One pupil explained that 'we have to understand about other religions so that we know how to pay respect.' A Muslim parent emphasised that the curriculum 'opened up real opportunities for discussion' ensuring that 'children are given time to think, feel and ask questions.'

## **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

Collective worship is distinctly Christian and absolutely central to the life of the school. The academic year starts with the whole school community joining together in church in a service of commitment. Adults and pupils alike articulate the importance they place on this special start to the day. Pupils of all denominations, faith and no faith, including the very youngest, find worship meaningful, interesting and enjoyable. Through worship, the school's Christian values are reinforced and illustrated and clearly have a positive impact on pupils' daily attitudes and behaviours. Worship is deeply rooted in Biblical material and pupils have a very mature knowledge and understanding of the life and teaching of Jesus, the meaning of the Holy Trinity and the key features of the Anglican tradition. Acts of worship always begin with the lighting of a candle which a pupil explained helps 'to remind us of God's presence with us.' Although worship is uncompromisingly Christian, members of other faiths value the respect they are shown and are active members of the worshipping community. A range of leaders from various traditions lead worship as part of a well-planned programme. Pupils learn Anglican practice through, for example, the use of liturgical responses and the changing of colours on the cross to follow the liturgical year. Prayer is central to the life of the school and collective worship is fundamental to spiritual development across the school community. Opportunities for prayer and quiet reflection are integral elements and part of the rhythm of school life. Formal prayers are shared at key moments throughout the day as well as at informal and spontaneous opportunities. Some children will, for example, use Golden Time at the end of the week as a chance to spend quiet time in the class prayer corner and others value the outdoor reflection area that can be used during break times. Time for prayer is also included when children are on a residential school journey. Staff explained that they were often given 'something to think carefully about' at their morning meeting. Members of other faiths value the opportunities they are given to fulfil their own religious observances. One colleague explained how her own prayer regime is an integral part of school life. The monitoring of collective worship was a development area at the last inspection; systems are now embedded and provide effective feedback from all members of the school community. There is a strong element of pupil involvement in leading, monitoring and evaluating worship and one member of the school council has a specific responsibility to monitor the distinctive Christian character of the school. As a result of this consultation process, worship has been moved to the start of the day; a decision much valued and appreciated by staff and pupils alike.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

RE has a very prominent profile in the school and contributes well to its Christian values and the spiritual development of pupils. Standards in RE are good and at least in line with other core subjects. Since the last inspection, systems for assessment are well-developed and used effectively so that pupils and their teachers know how well they are doing. Most pupils make at least good progress. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Following the new Diocesan scheme of work, there is a good balance between learning about Christianity and learning about different faiths. Pupils respond well to opportunities within RE to apply their learning to situations in the world today. The school has rightly taken the decision to utilise specific RE books and these are of a good quality and treated with respect by the pupils. A range of activities such as drama and art, in addition to more formal written tasks, help pupils to value and enjoy their learning in RE. Pupils really understand its importance and relevance to their lives. They are genuinely interested in the subject and readily engage in enquiry. The introduction of purple pen marking, in response to a development area in the previous inspection, has promoted an effective and on-going process of self-reflection and evaluation that pupils clearly relish. They clearly articulate their interest in the subject and they are able to engage in mature and thoughtful debate that is often beyond their years. Although there is a commitment across the school to take into account different learning styles, this is not consistent across all year groups. The school is also aware of the need to cater more effectively for the needs of the more able pupils who are not always sufficiently challenged. The leadership and management of RE is good. The new subject leader is well-qualified and is very effectively supported by the headteacher who has led the subject during a period of transition. A rigorous and visionary action plan is in place and RE has a high profile in whole school development planning. Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths of the subject area and of the areas that are in need of further refinement. Foundation governors are actively involved in the monitoring programme and have a clear understanding of the strengths and development areas for the school. To support and formalise this process further, a Faith Group has now been established.

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

Trinity St Mary's has been through a period of turbulence in the past year and it is to the great credit of the school and the local church community that this time of potential instability has been managed so successfully. Senior leaders and governors clearly share a vision that Christ's teaching is at the heart of everything they do. The headteacher explained that 'it's part of how I live my life. It's integral to who I am.' A governor celebrated the fact that 'Jesus is everywhere.' There is a real sense of community and well-being within the school. There are strong partnerships with parents who are effusive in their praise for the school. Staff, pupils and parents are all committed to implementing and living by the school's Christian vision; as one parent said, 'we may be of different faiths but we are all on the same path.' The deeply embedded Christian values quite deliberately focus on service to others and this mission is at the heart of life at the school. As a UNICEF Rights Respecting School the curriculum builds on the Christian mission and provides pupils with the opportunity to understand how they, as a school and as individuals, can influence the local community and wider world. In the recent past, pupils have actively supported Faith in Action, the Bishop's Lent Appeal and developed 'random acts of kindness.'

There are very strong links with St Mary's Church and the school has been actively involved in the appointment of the new incumbent. Equally, in this period of change, the wider church community has ensured that the spiritual and practical support for the school has been maintained. Planning for the future leadership of Trinity St Mary's as a church school is strong. The appointment process and induction programme for new staff ensures consistency in expectation; as a result, pupils achieve well and high standards have been maintained. The headteacher has effectively led RE and collective worship in the absence of a substantive post holder; this support is now continuing as the new RE lead implements an ambitious vision for the future. Governors have strong links with the Diocese and have completed the Bishop's Certificate in Church School Governance on two occasions. Foundation governors are now involved in more formal monitoring of RE and Collective Worship, as identified in the previous inspection. They have a good understanding of standards within the school and work closely with senior leaders to evaluate this success in the context of the school's distinctive Christian character. This area is not outstanding as the new Faith Group is not yet sufficiently effective in evaluating the impact of all elements of the school's Christian distinctiveness. Statutory requirements for collective worship and religious education are met and areas for improvement from the previous denominational report have been appropriately addressed.