

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Mary's CE Junior School	
Silkham Road, Oxted, Surrey, RH8 ONP	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Southwark
Previous SIAS inspection grade:	Good
Local authority	Surrey
Date/s of inspection	7 and 8 November 2016
Date of last inspection	17 October 2011
School's unique reference number	125194
Headteacher	Sarah Lewis
Inspector's name and number	Daphne Gibbs 210

School context

St Mary's is a large, over-subscribed Junior school serving the Oxted community. Approximately sixty families are regular church goers. Most children are White British with a small minority from other ethnic groups. The number of children who speak English as an additional language is therefore low. The proportion of disadvantaged children and those with special educational needs is currently just below the national average. Those supported by the pupil premium is well below the national average. Most senior and middle leaders are new to post since the last inspection. The school is currently providing executive leadership support to a local community infant school two days a week.

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

- A values led Christian ethos inspires all children to achieve and encourages them to face the future with confidence.
- Leadership and management is articulate and ambitious yet compassionate and has a coherent common purpose in promoting the school's vision rooted in distinctly Christian values.
- Sustained and proactive improvement in Religious Education (RE) since the last inspection is driving up standards and strongly contributing to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all learners.
- Calm, joyful collective worship emphasises community, belonging and equality, and challenges and encourages deeper thought and the development of personal spirituality.

Areas to improve

- Offer further opportunities in RE and collective worship to develop the children's knowledge, understanding and respect for diverse communities.
- Refine the RE assessment matrix in line with the development of the new Southwark Diocesan Board of Education (SDBE) schemes of work.
- Deepen the children's involvement in the planning and leading of collective worship in order to confirm, celebrate and develop their personal and collective spirituality.

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

St. Mary's proclaims in their mission statement that 'everyone is supported, challenged and secure in a caring Christian environment'. This is enthusiastically confirmed and affirmed by all stakeholders. The emphasis is on community where all belong and are valued and know they are special in the eyes of God. One child said he was autistic and he knew the head teacher was going to help him. The sense of community and Christian values is rooted in the thinking of all learners whether they are Christian, of other faiths or of none. They say they are bricks in a wall and if one brick is taken out the wall will fall down. The values led Christian ethos inspires all children to achieve and encourages them to face the future with confidence. The children are not presented with a formula but are encouraged to find their own path to God so facilitating personal spiritual growth. The creative, challenging curriculum, strongly incorporating Christian values and linked to biblical teaching, broadens knowledge and understanding. As a result, standards are high and above the national average. Progress is very good. Disadvantaged children are well supported and they achieve as well as other children in the school. Behaviour is excellent. Learners are calm, confident, receptive and reflective. Attendance is over 97%. Relationships are harmonious. The children are adamant that helping others makes you 'a special person'. St. Mary's is continually looking for ways to encourage understanding of and respect for diverse communities. They have recently made a link with a school in Lewisham but this area has not yet been fully developed. RE and collective worship are powerful components of the distinctive Christian character of the school. Through high order questioning and in depth analysis learners are enabled to make informed choices based on Christian values.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Calm, joyful and inclusive collective worship impacts positively on all learners and adults. It emphasises community, belonging and equality. It strongly supports the school's Christian values and Biblical teaching. It is relevant. Children are encouraged to express their views in the peaceful environment created. Challenging questions are asked but no answers are given. Each child is invited to engage and respond in a variety of ways grounded in distinctively Christian teaching. The children say collective worship makes them feel happy and to think deeply and to consider that 'maybe they might do that'. They sing with gusto. Themes are linked. Careful planning includes all the school's Christian values over a two year cycle. The liturgical year is explored in parallel. Consideration of different Christian traditions, the seasons of the Church's year and Christian festivals enables children to understand the key features of Anglican practice. Monitoring is undertaken by the RE coordinator and the Faith Team. The comments and reflections of the children inform future planning. A children's Faith Team has been formed and they play an active part in the planning of church services. Achieving greater participation in and delivery of acts of worship is a focus for development. Prayer plays an important and very natural part of the everyday life at St. Mary's. The children have confidence in prayer. 'They are not frightened to mention the G word' says the RE coordinator. While praying they feel a 'hand coming down and patting you on the back. You are special'. 'He is the centre and all roads lead to Him.' 'I know He is real' they proclaim. They understand that God the Father and God the Son are with them and that the Holy Spirit 'spreads the word of God'. They are proud of the Oasis, their special outdoor area, where they can pray and reflect and where decorated individual pebbles represent the unique role they play in the community.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

There has been sustained, proactive improvement since the last inspection. The leadership and management of RE is very strong. The enthusiastic RE coordinator has given coherence to the development of the Christian ethos and the shared vision of the school. Parents say she 'has made it real and inspired'. The governors confirm this and say 'there has been a change of attitude to RE'. Teaching is outstanding. Lessons are taught with humility, respect and challenge. Pacey delivery encourages involvement. Complex questioning results in deeper level responses illustrating that the children are learning from as well as learning about elements covered in the new, developing Southwark Diocesan Board's RE curriculum. This promotes an increased ability to make reasoned and informed

responses to life issues and moral choices. 'When you start asking questions the lights come on' says the RE coordinator. 'Mistakes are part of the journey'. The children respond with confidence and insight underlining the strongly held Christian values of the school. The many faceted RE curriculum provides opportunities for learners to understand and make links between the beliefs, practices and value systems of a range of faiths. The attainment and progress of pupils in RE is comparable to that in other subjects with many children performing at or above national expectations. Multi layered monitoring takes place on a regular basis using the 'Pod'/cross year group system. Concerns are shared and support appreciated in order to facilitate creative improvement. Through 'green pen marking', children's next steps are identified and they are given time to reflect and respond. A new assessment matrix has been devised. It has not yet been refined to take into account all the new schemes of work.

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

St. Mary's school community consistently lives out and promotes the vision rooted in distinctly Christian values. These are cascaded from the top. The very proactive, effective and visible head teacher shows care and compassion in her leadership. The incumbent expressed the view that a sensible, responsible and honest approach has led to healing when difficult issues have had to be resolved. The staff say they know the head teacher has trust in their talents and will unlock their potential. All elements of leadership and management work effectively together ensuring high quality outcomes for all learners. They have a coherent common purpose based on accurate self-evaluation and strategic planning. The very experienced, articulate and ambitious governing body are focused on next steps. They affirm they are led by the Holy Spirit. The proactive Faith Group keeps performance closely under review. They receive in depth reports from the RE coordinator. Supportive and constructive suggestions are made in order to strengthen Christian vision and purpose. The incumbent, who has a strong pastoral role within the school community, recently led a training day for staff on being 'Confidently Christian'. This explored, 'when is a value a Christian value?' and resulted in greater confidence in living and articulating Christian values throughout each day. Strong, mutually beneficial links exist between the school, the church and Southwark Diocese. Staff and governors make effective use of SDBE training as a means of strengthening current and future leadership of church schools. St. Mary's spills out into the community e.g. taking part in the Oxted (Advent) Adventure and jointly organising the May Fair etc. The areas for development from the last inspection have been fully addressed in a clear, uncluttered and logical way. This, combined with a real desire to embrace possible expansion for the benefit of children now and in the future, means St. Mary's has the capacity to improve, develop and grow even more as a distinctively Christian Church school.

SIAMS report November 2016 St. Mary's CE Junior School, Oxted, RH8 0NP