

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

<b>St Bartholomew's Church of England Voluntary Aided School</b>	
The Peak, Sydenham, London, SE26 4LJ	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Southwark</b>
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Name of multi-academy trust / federation	NA
Local Authority	Lewisham
Dates of inspection	14 June 2018
Date of last inspection	June 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided – 100726
Headteacher	Sara Sanbrook-Davies
Inspector's name and number	Pamela Draycott (161)

### School context

This larger than average primary school serves a diverse community. There is a high percentage of pupils from Black African, Black Caribbean or dual heritage backgrounds: twice the national average. The percentage for whom extra funding is received due to disadvantage is around the national average. Similarly the percentage with some sort of special educational need or disability (SEND) is around average. Most pupils are from various Christian backgrounds with a significant percentage coming from families declaring no religious affiliation. A higher than average percentage of pupils leave or enter the school at other than the usual points.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Bartholomew's Voluntary Aided Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by her senior leadership team, governors and the newly revitalised faith group, is effectively focused on promoting the school's explicitly Christian and inclusive ethos. This means that its Christian foundation fruitfully drives forward developments as a church school.
- Appropriately high academic expectations, excellent behaviour and mutually respectful and supportive relationships are clear expressions of the school's Christian vision and values.
- Both the worship programme and religious education (RE) have a suitably high profile within school life and contribute deeply to its Christian and inclusive values. This, along with the school's involvement in the LifeSavers project, impacts effectively on the strong provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development and their positive responses to such opportunities.
- Partnership with St Bartholomew's church is longstanding and constructively impacts on the school's distinctive Christian character.

### Areas to improve

- Involve pupils in more structured and formal ways in contributing to the ongoing development of the school's Christian distinctiveness and effectiveness as a church school.

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

This welcoming school has a strong emphasis on ensuring its Christian underpinning successfully sustains its service to its diverse community. This leads to pupils thriving academically and personally, within a respectful and inclusive learning environment. The school's Christian and educational vision is effectively summarised through its strapline: 'Believe. Achieve. Succeed'. It is clearly expressed through its focus on the values of 'love, truth, wisdom, generosity and perseverance'. These are recognised as shared human values, but, for the school, expressed in Christian terms. This means that they are closely linked to biblical teaching. As a Year 4 pupil said, 'Jesus is the best example of these values'. Similarly, the school's Christian identity is being lived out through high expectations and strong and mutually supportive relationships. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. This is purposefully supported by an effective behaviour and discipline policy, clearly based on Christian principles such as forgiveness and justice. It is well understood by pupils and consistently applied. Pupils' wellbeing is supported, for example, through strong pastoral systems and caring relationships. This means that pupils are happy in school which leads to good overall attendance. On those few occasions where behaviour or attendance gets in the way of learning, the school works purposefully, fairly and mainly successfully with pupils and their parents/carers to bring about positive resolutions. Attainment is at or above the national averages and the progress made is at least good. There remains a small gap between the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils and their peers. However, there are effective policies and practices in place and clear evidence that this gap is closing still further. As an expression of its Christian foundation SMSC development is given a high priority. Opportunities are very well taken across the curriculum, including in RE, to help pupils address issues of spiritual, moral and ethical concern. This is done, for example, through effective questioning, reflection and discussion. Charitable giving is rightly recognised by pupils and adults as an expression of the school's Christian ethos. As a Year 6 pupil reflected, 'God is kind and giving and so by giving to others, it's like giving to God and doing what God wants'. Extra-curricular clubs and activities extend SMSC opportunities very well. LifeSavers is a project supported by the Archbishop of Canterbury's Just Finance Foundation and Young Enterprise. Through it the school's values have a very practical expression in terms of financial management and the effective use of money. Pupils engage extremely well in RE. It successfully encourages an appreciation of difference and diversity, through considering similarities and differences between Christianity and a range of world faiths. The teaching of Christianity is firmly grounded. The multi-cultural, multi-ethnic dimension of Christianity as a world faith is addressed through drawing on the experiences of a variety of pupils and their families. However, this is not clearly planned for across the RE curriculum. RE, along with the worship programme, successfully support the school's Christian ethos and values through both the content covered and the opportunities for deeper thinking and reflection taken.

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

In effectively supporting pupils and adults in their deepening appreciation of the relevance of worship to life, the worship programme is thoughtfully planned and very well delivered. It has a high priority and is central in sustaining and promoting the school's Christian distinctiveness. Different elements of its ethos and values are clearly planned for, as are key Christian festivals. Various Anglican practices, such as using different coloured cloths at different times of the church's year, lighting candles and opening and closing sentences with responses, are clearly embedded in school practice. The daily act of worship is enhanced by well used prayer and reflection tables in classrooms, in the entrance foyer and by an outside prayer area. Pupils participate and respond very positively to worship and engage deeply with it. This engagement enhances their opportunities for spiritual and moral development very well. They respond well to the range of leaders which include staff, pupils, clergy and other visitors. The programme is very well extended through visits for worship to the parish church, particularly at key festival times and also by a termly Eucharist for Key Stage 2 pupils held in school. Prayers in class are said before lunch and at the end of the school day. This helps in prayer permeating the school day. Pupils are encouraged to write their own prayers, reflections or wishes. Many of these show real care and concern for others. They know the Lord's Prayer and a school prayer and these help them to express the importance of prayer within the school and for many in their individual lives too. Biblical teachings and stories are closely related to the school's Christian values and to events in the world today. This contributes to a high level of understanding of the importance of the Bible for Christians and particularly of the significance of Jesus and his teaching. As a consequence they are able to relate biblical teaching to life today. Pupils have a developing understanding of key Christian beliefs such as that of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is appropriately reinforced by regularly lighting three candles at the start of worship which pupils know represent God as Holy Trinity. As a Year 6 pupil reflected, 'God is the Key, Jesus died to forgive sin and the Holy Spirit works in the world. They are the same but different'. The programme is monitored by senior leaders, governors and the faith group which helps to reinforce and refine its relevance in school life.

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

RE has a high profile and its importance in supporting the school's Christian and inclusive ethos is very well celebrated. The RE curriculum has been reviewed in the light of a new scheme of work produced by the Diocese of Southwark. The school is using this very well as a basis and are adapting activities appropriately to meet the needs of their pupils. The refreshed curriculum is sustaining at least good, if not better attainment and progress. Both are in line, if not above, those of other core subjects within the school. RE is skilfully led and managed by a committed subject leader who provides effective support in developing the subject area. In keeping with whole school practice, alterations to the assessment process for RE have recently been made. This is strengthening the accuracy of assessment practice and is providing a firm base to enable pupils to deepen their reflection and thinking on the areas covered. There is an appropriate balance of content in RE that suitably develops knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other world faiths. Consequently, RE is taught in an inclusive way so that pupils of different faiths and of no faith feel their views, opinions and beliefs are valued. This leads to pupils being attentive during lessons and participation in discussions being very good. Biblical stories and exploring the significance of key Christian festivals, symbols and beliefs provides a major focus when teaching about Christianity. Opportunities for pupils to reflect on the significance of different beliefs and practices for themselves and others are expressly planned for. A wide range of activities develop skills and engage pupils closely in their learning. The link governor and senior leaders work closely with the subject leader to ensure continued refinement. Regular monitoring and accurate evaluation of teaching and progress feeds into the subject action planning well, which likewise ensures that RE continues to contribute positively to pupils' academic and personal development.

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

The strong leadership of the headteacher is built on a clearly articulated view of the school's Christian underpinning. Her vision is very well supported by her senior leaders and governors and shared widely throughout the staff team, pupils and parents/carers. Governors are highly committed to and knowledgeable about the school. They are appropriately involved in its life, providing effective support and challenge. Key issues for improvement since the previous denominational inspection have been very well addressed. This has supported the school in maintaining its outstanding status as a Church of England school serving a diverse community. The faith group, which involves governors, parents and staff, has been revitalised recently. Already its renewed focus is impacting positively. Pupils are not involved in this group. Although they have opportunities through, for example, pupil interviews and school council to contribute to discussions about the school's Christian distinctiveness, RE and worship, this is not formalised. The school's self-evaluation of its distinctiveness as a church school is detailed and accurate. It leads to effective action planning. It includes, as part of the ongoing cycle of development, firm plans to review the school's vision and values. This is in order to ensure their continued relevance in the light of national and local developments in Anglican school education. Strong leadership for both RE and worship is secured and both areas meet statutory requirements. Regular staff training for RE and other aspects of working within the church school context is provided. This promotes the professional development of staff effectively. The school works positively and has supportive relationships with parents/carers, who are kept very well informed of their children's progress. The vast majority are very supportive of the school's Christian and inclusive underpinning. They rightly recognise how the school's Christian underpinning contributes to their children's growth and development 'in an holistic way'. Links with St Bartholomew's church are longstanding and deep. There is strong clergy involvement and members of the congregation are governors. Links with other Anglican churches and other denominations represented locally enhance this further. Links with the Diocese are drawn on through, for example, courses and advisory support. These have impacted positively on school practice.

SIAMS report (June 2018) St Bartholomew's CE VA Primary School, Sydenham, London, SE26 4LJ