

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

The Cathedral School of St Saviour and St Mary Overie	
Redcross Way, London SE1 IHA	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Southwark
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Southwark
Name of multi-academy trust / federation	NA
Date of inspection	16 March 2018
Date of last inspection	4 March 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 100840
Headteacher	Filiz Scott
Inspector's name and number	Imogen Woods 905

School context

The Cathedral School is an inner city, voluntary aided, one form entry school with a Nursery class. It is served by the cathedral church of St Saviour and St Mary Overie (Southwark Cathedral). Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic and religious backgrounds. 63% of children are Anglican and 70% attend a Christian church. The number of pupils with English as an additional language, is above national average. The proportion eligible for free school meals and special needs or disabilities is below national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of The Cathedral School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The Christian character of the school is highly inclusive.
- Senior leaders confidently and proudly articulate the school's vision and values which impact strongly on the lives of pupils and the wider community.
- High quality religious education (RE) encourages pupils to speak of religious ideas and faith in a stimulating, relaxed and encouraging atmosphere.
- As a result of the highly inclusive Christian ethos and the teachers' considerable skill and commitment to the school's Christian values, pupils of all backgrounds and abilities deepen their understanding of complex and challenging subjects and attain very well.
- Collective worship emphasises, celebrates and affirms the school's Christian values.

Areas to improve

- Further clarify the link between the school motto, vision and 'fruits of friendship', particularly for those new to governance, so that all stakeholders articulate the impact they make in the lives of the pupils and the wider school community.

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

The distinctively Christian vision 'Live Life in all its Fullness' (John 10:10) is made explicit and is deeply embedded in the daily life of the school.

All members of the school community articulate the significant impact the Christian characteristics expressed through the vision have on the lives of the pupils. Leaders develop this Christian vision through discussions with governors, communicating the outcomes of these decisions to the school's community and expressing them through the carefully planned curriculum. As a result of these actions, parents feel that the practical expression and outworking of these Christian values is a particular strength of the school. They give examples of where the school staff have facilitated their families' needs at times of hardship. It is universally agreed by parents that this is a school to be grateful for and a privilege to be part of.

The school's Christian character has a high profile and clearly shapes its approach to issues of attendance and pupil exclusion for all groups of learners. The wellbeing of all pupils regardless of background or ability is carefully considered. As a result, attendance is high at 97%. RE plays an important role in shaping the Christian character of the school. An impressive range of activities and events encourage a deep and meaningful experience for pupils.

Special events such as International Week, alongside a quality RE curriculum, make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result, pupils who are Christian, from other faith backgrounds and those who are not from a faith background and their families, are regularly involved in exploring a wide range of cultures and religions. Pupils enjoy these events and speak positively about the impact they have on their own lives and the lives of their families. They talk excitedly about being involved in special occasions and are clearly proud of their dances, art, acting and food preparing. They love to have their parents and carers come in to school. One older child spoke about the care that teachers take planning for these events. This awareness of the love the staff show the pupils and their families is very much typical across all pupils and their parents.

Other aspects of school life are carefully planned to involve the whole school community. Questionnaires for parents ensure regular and meaningful feedback. Pupils have wide and varied opportunities to share their ideas. Consequently, pupils are open, confident and know that their views, beliefs and values are respected. These actions lead to a significant interpretation of spirituality. The confidence and openness of all stakeholders evidences a very secure school, which plays an immensely important and lasting effect on the community within which it serves.

The Cathedral School benefits from being situated in the heart of London Bridge and serves a multi-cultural community. As a consequence, pupils have a deep level of respect for diversity and difference in others. The school team actively pursue an inclusive curriculum through its distinctly Christian ethos. One pupil said 'Everybody's welcome in our school'. The theme of inclusion for all regardless of race or culture, background or gender, runs deeply throughout the school.

The Christian mission, the motto and the 'fruits of friendship' work well. As a result, behaviour across the school is exceptional. Pupils across the age and ability range are articulate, open and confident. They are keen to talk about their school. Pupils have many opportunities to offer their ideas. This leads to highly motivated pupils. The calm and purposeful atmosphere runs from the very youngest children to the oldest. Staff and pupils are mutually respectful.

A sense of deep care permeates daily life and establishes the Cathedral School as an excellent example of a diocesan church school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The Cathedral School ensures that collective worship is central to its daily life. Close links with Southwark Cathedral means that the children have rich and varied opportunities to worship.

Pupils' contribution is highly valued and many are involved on a regular basis in services in school and at the cathedral. As a result, pupils have a deep sense of their own spirituality, they pray regularly. The pupils and staff value the place of prayer in the life of the school and its community. Local clergy visit the school regularly and are well known to families and staff. By supporting the leaders and pupils in planning, monitoring and evaluating worship, they make a significant impact on the lives of all members of the school community.

Pupils have a detailed understanding of the rhythms of the church year through worship which is well planned, led and evaluated. Highly effective steps for improvement and adaptation are integral to this process. Older children attend and perform at the annual leavers' service. Pupils understand which year group lead services in the cathedral and in their classes on a regular basis. They are excited about doing so. These services are Anglican in nature and, by lighting a candle to mark the presence of Jesus, pupils are able to engage with his centrality within the Christian faith.

The pupils' understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is developed well through a series of well-planned acts of worship. Subsequently, the children have a sound knowledge of the Holy Trinity. Pupils and staff share opportunities to pray open, liturgical and personal prayers. Personal prayers, collected by the children's prayer helpers from class reflection tables, are placed in a prayer book which is used in whole school worship. The worship leader has ensured that a comprehensive and aspirational approach to worship has been developed.

Pupils have a secure understanding of the transformational nature that their actions have on the community around them.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE has a very high profile within the school. The subject leader is ambitious for the subject, highly organised and, as a consequence, attainment is outstanding and high in comparison with other subjects. Leaders have a sound understanding of new assessment systems and how they demonstrate the attainment of all pupil groups. This understanding results in accurate judgments of standards across the school which, in turn, leads to excellent teaching and learning.

Pupils' progress is strong with many, across the school, working above the expectations of the RE syllabus. The varied approach to the teaching of RE has made a significant impact not only to pupils' enjoyment of the subject but also their ability to make links between faiths and cultures. Pupils are confident in their ability to ask questions and have an excellent understanding of the rich diversity of the community they live and learn in.

The inclusive leadership of the subject leader influences the attitudes of the pupils and staff and directly affects the deepening understanding of the Christian values. As a consequence, pupils are able to express their own spirituality without fear or prejudice. They are confident in all areas of their learning, are motivated and learn well.

The curriculum is highly effective. It is richly developed, based on the new diocesan syllabus and is fully implemented. It offers a level of challenge which staff use very well. Enquiry and analysis, as well as other higher level skills, are used to very good effect by skilful teachers and teaching assistants. Teachers ensure that additional support is timely and well-focussed for less able pupils whilst more able are challenged appropriately. Teaching assistants support individual pupils with skill and sensitivity.

The curriculum is further enhanced by the placement of special weeks such as 'International Week' where pupils learn about religions and cultures from around the world. Parents and the wider community are involved, participate and lead activities.

The quality of the majority of teaching is outstanding and never less than good. The school's self-evaluation, evidence of work in books, pupils' attitudes and parents' responses show that this is standard practice in the school.

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

Leadership and management is exceptionally strong in this very special school. The headteacher, her senior leaders and many governors effectively promote and live out the school's mission, motto and themes. However, those new to governance do not fully understand or articulate the important links between the school motto, vision and 'fruits of friendship' and the impact they make in the lives of the pupils and the wider school community.

Governors visit the school frequently and are involved in regular and robust monitoring and evaluation as well as informally meeting with subject leaders and other staff. As a result, governors have developed an excellent understanding of the school's performance and its distinctiveness. They are equally involved in working with senior leaders in developing the curriculum and supporting them in the leading of special events.

The commitment of governors and senior leaders has a clear and lasting impact on the exemplary behaviour and attitudes of the pupils, which is seen consistently throughout the school. Governors talk of the challenges their

role brings and describe how closely they hold the Christian motto when working with the headteacher in a range of strategic situations. They have been at the forefront of leading challenging decisions. Due to the high level of thought that is given to the whole school community's wellbeing, and the care that is taken over responding to individual needs, pupils have a deep sense of their own cultural and spiritual development.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school's contribution to their lives and the lives of their families. These mutually beneficial relationships extend to the diocese where the school has supported another diocesan school and the diocese as a whole as it is highly involved in the life of the cathedral.

Royal visits and other important events are welcomed by the school. Leaders are inducted well and, due to the well-executed training they receive, are exceptionally committed to their role within school. They ensure that the pupils benefit from well-planned learning opportunities.

The leaders' relentless drive for improvement has led to some notable and significant successes. They have, for example, been involved in leading showcasing events on behalf of the diocese and gaining national and international awards. The school readily offers leadership opportunities to others and through running various award applications, such as the Inclusion Quality Mark or RE Gold mark, is able to prepare experienced staff well for leading church schools in the future.

The school has, therefore, clearly addressed the focus for development from the last inspection. The arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements.

The schools' leaders are resilient in difficult times. The relationships within the school are close and so families feel supported, known and loved.

This is a school where stories are told of hope and a future.

SIAMS report March 2018, The Cathedral School of St Saviour and St Mary Overie, Redcross Way, London SE11HA