

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Boutcher Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	
Grange Road, Bermondsey, London, SE1 3BW	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Southwark
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Name of multi-academy trust / federation	NA
Local Authority	Southwark
Date of inspection	26 June 2018
Date of last inspection	July 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided – 100822
Headteacher	Eilidh Verhoeven
Inspector's name and number	Pamela Draycott (161)

School context

This small school serves a diverse area. Around half the pupils are from Black African backgrounds, with a significant percentage of White British and a wide range of other ethnic backgrounds represented. The percentage with some sort of special educational need or disability (SEND) is around the national average and has increased recently. The percentage for whom extra funding is received due to social or economic disadvantage is above average as is the percentage who speak English as an additional language. The school has longstanding links with its parish church and with the Worshipful Company of Dyers.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Boutcher Voluntary Aided Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The school's explicit and inclusive Christian vision, is very well reflected through its motto of, 'Faith, Family and Fascination'. It positively permeates its life and work, leading to a consistency of approach and strong commitment to learning across the school.
- The purposeful leadership of the headteacher, based on a clear Christian understanding of education, is ably supported by senior leaders, staff and governors. It results in high academic expectations and outcomes, alongside the excellent personal development and wellbeing of pupils.
- The calm and friendly learning environment explicitly reflects the school's motto. It is shown through the pupils' excellent behaviour and in the mutually respectful and supportive relationships.
- Both the collective worship programme and religious education (RE) have very high profiles in school life and significantly contribute to its Christian and inclusive values.
- A longstanding, positive and mutually supportive relationship with the parish Church of St Mary Magdalen and a strong link with the Worshipful Company of Dyers (a Guild of the City of London) positively impact on the school's life and work.

Areas to improve

- In keeping with the ongoing cycle of improvement and in line with local and national developments, refine assessment practice in RE. This is so that pupils are very clear about their attainment and progress in the subject and know the next steps that are required in their learning.

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

The school's explicit and inclusive Christian vision, summarised through its motto, 'Faith, Family and Fascination,' strongly sustains and drives forward its service to its diverse community. Expressly drawing on the teaching and example of Jesus, its values of love, forgiveness, trust, justice, thankfulness and friendship are shared and deeply embedded in school life. They are well known and understood by pupils and adults alike, who can make links between them and their actions and experience. For example, 'Jesus forgives all the bad things done to him. It's important to forgive when you are upset or you'll never be friends again,' as a Key Stage 2 pupil reflected. The values can be seen in the mutually supportive and respectful relationships alongside the pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes towards each other and their learning. This leads to pupils thriving both academically and personally. Pupils attain very well across the school with standards reached being well above the local and national averages. Their progress, from their various starting points, is consistently very good and in some cases excellent. This includes disadvantaged pupils and SEND pupils, whose attainment and progress is well above that of their peers nationally. Pupils and adults live by the maxim that each day is a fresh start, so that, on those very few occasions where behaviour gets in the way of learning, justice, forgiveness and love are displayed. Positive rewards for good behaviour and actions reinforce the school's values very well. Pupils are happy in school and this is reflected in the consistently high levels of attendance, which is well above the national average. Strong pastoral care is provided for both pupils and staff with safeguarding, inclusion and wellbeing given appropriately high priorities. This again reflects the school's compassionate and caring atmosphere. A Key Stage 2 pupil said, 'There is always someone to talk to or to play with. We look out for each other. If someone is sad we try to help because we are like a family'. As an expression of its Christian foundation a wide range of opportunities to enhance spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is provided. This is through the broad and balanced curriculum, including in RE, through the collective worship programme and through extra-curricular clubs, trips and visits. The pupils' voice is well listened to through, for example, the school council and regular questionnaires as well as informal opportunities for sharing. Individuals' views and opinions are respected and pupils are encouraged to share these through open-ended questioning in lessons. Pupils and staff reflect on and share issues of spiritual and moral concern through the worship programme. The buddy system, where older pupils support younger ones, regular sporting and fitness activities, and charitable giving encourage pupils to take responsibility for themselves and others. Cultural, ethnic and religious diversity, evident in the school is well celebrated and extended through links with, for example, schools in Germany, China and more recently India. These enhance provision further. Trips and visits augment the educational and personal development of pupils very well. The cost of many of these is subsidised through the school's link with the Worshipful Company of Dyers. Pupils enjoy RE and rightly recognise that it helps them learn about and value difference and diversity in their school, in the locality and further afield. Pupils have a good understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic faith. This is because the school appropriately emphasises difference and diversity within Christianity. It draws well on the experiences of a variety of pupils and their families and in different units of work. RE, along with the worship programme, clearly support the school's Christian ethos and values.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The daily collective worship programme is central to school life and to the development of its deeply Christian and inclusive ethos. The high priority given to it across the school is exemplified in its detailed planning and very good delivery. This results in it successfully sustaining and developing the school's Christian ethos and values. It provides a range of appropriate opportunities for considering issues of spiritual and moral concern. The importance of the Bible and especially of Jesus' teaching and life is well focused on. This results in pupils having a very good appreciation of these two core dimensions of Christian belief. Likewise, through worship, pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of other core Christian beliefs, such as that of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The understanding of such beliefs are suitably extended through content focus within the RE curriculum. The use of various Anglican practices, such as an altar for the focal point of worship, lit candles and opening and closing sentences with responses are well embedded in school practice. This means that pupils have a growing appreciation of the symbolism of worship. 'We put our hands together when we pray to help us be still. It helps you be more calm', as a Key Stage 1 pupil said. A Key Stage 2 pupil reflected, 'We light candles to show that Jesus is the light of the world. It's like a light in your heart'. The Eucharist is an important element of worship across Key Stage 2 with around a third of pupils being admitted to communion in Year 5 following suitable preparation. Pupils from other faith backgrounds and none are well included in the daily worship programme. Their own background is very well celebrated through it. The daily act of worship in school is suitably enriched through worship in St Mary Magdalene church, which takes place at least once each half term. Prayer is central to the worship programme and to school life, making an effective and valued contribution to pupils' and adults' spiritual life, irrespective of their faith background. As a member of staff observed it provides, 'space for reflection'. Opportunities for prayer permeate the school day including in the daily act of worship, before lunch and at the end of the school day. Pupils know, and appreciate something of the significance of the Lord's Prayer. A recently introduced school prayer, drawn up by

some pupils and the incumbent, supports its prayer life further. Pupils write their own prayers to use in worship and many say they pray at home as well as at school. A Key Stage 1 pupil reflected that, 'Prayer is talking to God and God helps you'. Pupils understand that there are different types of prayer, and many, especially in the older years can use correct terms such as thanksgiving, confession, absolution and petition. 'Prayer is a way you show you rely on God and helps you feel calm,' as a Key Stage 2 pupil said. In addition to this, prayer corners in each classroom are well used and there are prayer groups for pupils, staff and parents which meet regularly. The faith leaders are pupils who take a particular oversight of the school's Christian and inclusive ethos. They monitor the use of display and prayer corners and contribute to leading, monitoring and evaluating the worship programme. Their role in contributing to the themes chosen for worship is more limited. The programme is well planned and evaluated by senior leaders, governors and by the Vision and Values group, which is a sub-committee of the governing body. Through this planning, monitoring and evaluation, areas for refinement are identified leading to continued development.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE has a high profile and is treated as a core subject alongside English, mathematics and science. The RE curriculum has been reviewed in the light of a new scheme of work produced by the Diocese of Southwark. This is being used and adapted very well to meet the varying needs of pupils. The curriculum is very well supported by an approach to teaching Christianity based on key concepts such as creation and forgiveness. Consequently, the revised curriculum is continuing to support the high levels of attainment and progress, which are in line with other core subjects across the school. In keeping with the diocesan scheme of work there is a good balance between content focusing on Christianity and that which focuses on a range of world faiths, including Judaism, Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism. Opportunities are well planned for pupils to reflect on the similarities and differences in religious beliefs and practices. Consequently, pupils of different faiths and of no faith feel their opinions and beliefs are valued. This leads to a positive learning environment in lessons and to pupils being attentive and engaged. Pupils enjoy the range of activities they take part in across the RE curriculum, including discussion and debate, drama, writing in different styles and artwork. This variety also contributes to their continued engagement with RE and supports their learning very well. Current assessment in RE is detailed and marking is completed regularly. However, pupils do not consistently know how well they are achieving in RE or the precise next steps needed to improve further. Assessment practice in RE is due for review as part of the ongoing cycle of development. This is timely in order to ensure that it keeps pace with developments locally and nationally in RE assessment practice. Governors are well informed about the RE curriculum through regular monitoring and accurate evaluation of teaching and the implementation of the new scheme of work. Teaching in RE is consistently good and often outstanding. The evaluation of the quality of teaching across the subject feeds into the accurate subject action planning very well. RE subject leadership is in the process of being handed over to another colleague. This process is part of the school's development process for its staff and is being handled very well.

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

The focused leadership of the headteacher draws on and develops further the school's Christian underpinning as reflected in its mission statement, motto and values. These are addressed consistently across school life and sustain and drive forward improvement. Her vision for Christian and inclusive education is very well shared by governors, staff and parents. Likewise, pupils and staff can express how the school's Christian foundation impacts on their experience in school. Governors are highly committed to and appropriately involved in their school. They know it well and this feeds into the accurate and focused development planning undertaken. The key issue from the previous denominational inspection was linked to pupil and parental involvement in worship. This has been well addressed and has supported the school in maintaining its outstanding status as a Church of England school, serving a diverse community. Leadership of 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 overwhelmingly recognise how the Christian and inclusive ethos of the school benefits their children, irrespective of the family's faith background. Parents are well informed of their children's progress. Strong links with St Mary Magdalene church are longstanding. Positive clergy involvement, alongside that of governors associated with the church, reflect the partnership very well. Links with other Anglican churches and other denominations and religions represented locally are in place and supportive. The Worshipful Company of Dyers enhances the educational and personal development of pupils through its charitable giving and through providing governors and other regular support to the school. Links with the Diocese are drawn on through, for example, courses and advisory support. These impact well on school developments as advice is incorporated into school practice. There are also positive links with other Anglican schools locally.