

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

St Mark's Church of England Primary School			
Address	Sussex Way, London N19 4JF		
Date of inspection	31 January 2020	Status of school	Voluntary aided primary
Diocese	London	URN	100444

<b>Overall Judgement</b>	<b>How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>Additional Judgements</b>	<b>The impact of collective worship</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
	<b>The effectiveness of religious education (RE)</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>

### School context

St Mark's is a primary school with 245 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. There are high proportions of pupils who are Black British African and Black British Caribbean. Many pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is well above national averages. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages. Since the previous denominational inspection, the head of school has become the substantive headteacher and a new deputy headteacher has been appointed.

### The school's Christian vision

Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path (Psalm 119, verse 105).  
 Together, we will prepare you for life and learning  
 Together, we will teach you to live within the values of God's word  
 Together, we will safely lead you on your journey  
 Together, we will guide you to a fulfilling future  
 Together, we will forever help you to grow in confidence.

### Key findings

- The Christian vision is clear, direct and firmly underpinned by accessible theological understanding. Its coherence has released an energy that permeates every aspect of the school's life.
- Promoted by the vision, strong 'wrap-around' pastoral care and a relentless focus on mental health and wellbeing ensures that the needs of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils are very effectively met.
- The practice of courageous advocacy is a considerable strength because, inspired by the agency of the vision, it is increasingly being driven by the children themselves.
- As an expression of the vision, inclusive and invitational acts of collective worship are important moments within each day for pupils and adults alike, although pupils' roles in planning and leading need to be extended.
- Religious education (RE) receives a high profile and pupils enjoy learning about the subject. While most pupils, including the disadvantaged, make good progress, higher attainers need to be given more challenge.

### Areas for development

- Extend pupils' roles in planning and leading aspects of collective worship to enhance their sense of engagement and possess a greater sense of ownership.
- Establish dedicated prayer spaces that enable all pupils to have extended opportunities for focusing and concentrating on personal prayer and reflection.
- Provide more challenge in the teaching of the higher attaining pupils so that they make better progress in RE.

## **How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?**

### **Inspection findings**

St Mark's is an oversubscribed and outward-looking school. An engaging and constantly updating website presents a firm and positive statement about the school's Christian character.

The Christian vision is clear, direct and firmly underpinned by accessible theological understanding. Consisting of the five strands, it sets an aspirational ambition and direction for each member of the school's community. The strands are rooted in a well chosen biblical verse, embedded in the local context and the history of the school. The vision is well known and understood by stakeholders. But most importantly, it has released an energy that permeates every aspect of the school's life. Accordingly, it has brought about secure and sustainable improvements in the school's Christian distinctiveness. Parents are effusive in their support and enthusiastic in their praise of the school. They appreciate how the Christian vision builds a strong sense of belonging and purpose across this vibrant school community. There is a justifiable sense of pride in the school and its achievements.

Behaviour is of a high standard and the school operates as a harmonious and extremely inclusive learning community. Inspired by their vision, pupils become increasingly enthusiastic, responsible and dedicated learners. Over-time and overall pupils' progress in the academic subjects of reading, writing and mathematics has been above national averages. Through nurture and challenge the disadvantaged pupils also do well. Attendance is above national averages. Promoted by the vision, 'wrap-around' pastoral care is strength. Leaders ensure that the specific needs of all pupils, and children from vulnerable families in particular, are very effectively met. Wellbeing and mental health are given a very high priority. The school is part of the Islington Trauma Informed Practice in School's Project. This enables staff to very effectively support the most vulnerable pupils and families who are affected by extreme and challenging circumstances. This group forms a significant proportion of the pupils.

The agency of the vision ensures that pupils' moral and character development is very effectively met. Pupils assume key roles in leadership. For example the junior leadership team, for which they apply, and school council, for which they are elected. The practice and understanding of courageous advocacy is a considerable strength because it is increasingly driven by children themselves. An enthusiastic and well-informed group of pupils have created a pressure group for climate change. They have produced an open letter stating, 'our main goal is to show people that you have a voice ... no matter how young or old you are'. Pupils have taken part in several local climate change marches, involving them in making, banners, speeches and writing letters. For the past three years staff and pupils have volunteered at a local winter night shelter for the homeless, situated in a local church. Older pupils demonstrate a mature understanding of global awareness. They show an understanding of how cultures can learn from and appreciate one another. All of these experiences contribute to an exemplary sense of the dignity of everyone and respect for all.

Driven by the energy of the vision, pupils are involved in a broad and interesting range of learning activities. The breath of the curriculum is well planned and imaginatively enlivened through extra-curricular provision. For example, music education is enriched through an entitlement for all Key Stage 2 pupils to learn a musical instrument. The musically talented are catered for within extra curricula opportunities provided by a London music school. There is an established, impressive and flourishing garden that is nurtured by the children, many of whom do not have a garden at home. Prayer, silence and reflection are already well integrated into school life. The school has a secure and growing understanding of spiritual development. Professional learning for staff and governors has helped to further raise awareness, deepen understanding and extend opportunities for spiritual growth.

Governors have developed the school as a church school through their commitment, support and challenge. They were instrumental in devising and embedding the vision and have made notable contributions to the successes of all pupils. Their monitoring and evaluation of RE is effective; although a more structured process is necessary for areas such as collective worship. Strategic planning is evidenced-based and addresses elements of Christian distinctiveness, along with other priorities such as raising standards for higher attainers. Strong and mutually beneficial partnerships with the local parish church have been established. The new vicar has 'hit the

ground running' and is actively building on excellent work that has gone before. The school has formed a strong and productive partnership with the diocese. It has readily sought and sensibly considered advice that has, in turn, been amplified through shared professional learning across the school. Moderation of RE work has been carried out across the deanery and good practice is shared with other schools.

As an expression of the vision, inclusive and invitational acts of worship are important moments within each day for pupils and adults alike. Planning is based on the school's Christian values, the phases of the liturgical year and chosen biblical passages. Leaders in association with staff and clergy lead collective worship. Pupils help organise worship, take part in the activities, in school and church, and lead prayers. However, their role in planning, and leading is not as well developed and there is ample scope for their more active involvement and consequent ownership. Prayer plays a central role in the life of the school. Pupils say grace before lunch as well as praying during formal acts of worship. Adults form part of this prayer-life through staff prayers and a parent group that meets regularly to pray for the school. Each child has access to the dedicated prayer space that is situated in their classroom. However, opportunities for practising deeper and uninterrupted personal prayer and reflection are not available to them elsewhere within the school.

RE receives a high profile and pupils actively learn about Christianity and other world faiths. The subject is well led and appropriately reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement. Planning, which is effectively supported by the subject leader, is carried out through the use of diocesan syllabus. This encourages the delivery of an enquiry-based curriculum where pupils learn both from and about religion. They are given a richly resourced experience of faiths other than Christianity and accordingly demonstrate due respect and understanding. The learning journey is effectively captured in books and class journals and work is generally well presented. Accurate assessments help teachers gauge pupils' progress and acts as a basis for offering realistic feedback. However, the most able need to receive more challenge.



**The effectiveness of RE is Good**

The standard of teaching is good overall and pupils enjoy learning everything that the subject has to offer them. Most pupils make good progress, including the disadvantaged. Overall, pupils achieve standards that are in line with the expectations of the diocesan units of work for RE. However, the higher attainers could achieve more through their teachers placing a greater emphasis on enquiry, deeper questioning and more challenge within their independent tasks.

Headteacher	Martha Braithwaite
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