

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Laleham CE Primary School

The Broadway, Staines, Middlesex, TW18 1SB

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	London
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Surrey
Date/s of inspection	24 May 2017
Date of last inspection	April 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided Primary 125229
Headteacher	Neil Meehan
Inspector's name and number	John Viner NS144

School context

Laleham is a larger than average primary school located in the village of Laleham and serving the parish of All Saints. Its 419 pupils are drawn from the local area and are largely of White British heritage. A smaller than average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. There is a higher than average proportion of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan but a slightly smaller than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs overall. A much smaller than average proportion of disadvantage pupils are eligible for additional government funding. Around 40% of pupils attend church. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are above national averages.

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

- Leaders and governors articulate an ambitious Christian vision for the school that has made it a place of deep spiritual experience where pupils thrive personally, academically and spiritually.
- Christian values underpin the school, define its purpose and are evident in every aspect of its work.
- Collective worship is a key part of every day, affirming all who attend, regardless of faith or belief, and reinforcing the values that the school promotes.
- The highly effective systems for keeping the school's Christian distinctiveness under review draw in all stakeholders so that there is a real sense of sharing in its mission.
- Religious education (RE) is rich and interesting, engaging pupils in deep questions so that they achieve high standards.
- The strong and effective partnership with the parish church adds significant capacity to the school's service to its pupils, their families and the community.

Areas to improve

- Review the content of the RE curriculum so that pupils are introduced to key faiths in a progressive and developmental way.
- Provide further training for the RE Leader so that she is even better equipped to provide high quality support to teachers working with a demanding curriculum.

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

Distinctively Christian values underpin the school and infuse every aspect of its work and define its purpose. They are recognised as central to the school and articulated by parents, staff and governors. Pupils know the Bible verse that supports the values and confidently explain how being joined to God unites them and leads to positive attitudes. Regardless of faith, pupils agree that, 'we feel very close to God here'. Pupils can explain in detail how Respect, Kindness, Friendship, Loyalty, Forgiveness and Love inspire the excellent behaviour that characterises the school. These core values inspire the warm, trusting and caring relationships that are evident between and among adults and pupils. There is a common sense of connection: staff say that they 'love the sense of all being one family' and parents agree, saying that they recognise it as soon as they walk into the building. Pupils say that they are safe, feel valued and special because this is a place where bullying is rare and conflicts are resolved quickly. As a result, they come to school regularly and enthusiastically, work hard, make good progress and achieve high standards, regardless of their starting points. The school promotes a sense of spirituality that is shared by the whole community and pupils have many opportunities to ask deep questions, learn the power of reflection and develop their spiritual personality, irrespective of their personal faith or belief. Because the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development so effectively, they develop highly positive attitudes of tolerance and respect for all faiths and backgrounds. They both recognise and celebrate diversity. They are universally excited by religious education and love to learn about different faiths and beliefs. It is in this context that they recognise that Christianity is a multi-cultural world faith. This is reflected in the excellent use of reflection areas and displays in classrooms and around the school which provoke thoughtful responses. In this way RE plays a key role in confirming the school's Christian distinctiveness.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship lies at the heart of the school and a tapestry of prayer, faith and worship is woven around every aspect of the school and pupils' learning. The introduction of what the school calls 'iShare themes' allows worship to be carefully and sensitively planned well in advance, involving pupils in many aspects, from planning and leading to evaluating. The weekly pattern of worship enables pupils to experience it as a whole school, and in smaller, more intimate groupings while the variety of leaders, including regular visits by clergy, ensure that it is always fresh and interesting. When pupils gather to practise singing or for the weekly awards assembly, care is taken to ensure that these are still worshipful experiences, embedded in the school's Christian identity. Worship is always biblical and rooted in the person and life of Jesus and the frequent use of learnt Bible verses means that, by the time they leave the school, pupils are familiar with key aspects of its teaching. Through worship, pupils develop a firm understanding that Christians regard God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and can explain this in simple terms, using the ideas presented to them in worship. Through the use of a simple liturgy and some set prayers, pupils experience Anglican tradition and practice, which they develop through the times when worship takes place in church. Parents say that they value the opportunities they have to attend worship and that they are sometimes humbled by the depth of their children's spiritual experience. Worship is inclusive and affirms all who attend, whether adults or pupils: pupils say that, if you come to Laleham without a church background, it's okay because you soon feel involved. It is particularly impressive that older pupils have the opportunity to experience planning and leading worship for the whole school. When worship is led by pupils, others regard it with as much respect as if it was led by an adult.

Prayer is as central to the school as worship. From the time they join the school, pupils learn about the nature and purpose of prayer and, irrespective of their faith, come to regard it as a natural part of human nature, lived in a sense of the spiritual. Parents of other faiths say how this strengthens their child's own faith and deepens their experience of prayer. There are many excellent opportunities for pupils to reflect and pray, sometimes privately and sometimes in writing prayers for use in worship. Pupils say how much they value the Faith Corner, where they can sit quietly and commit their prayers to God.

Worship is carefully and thoroughly monitored by leaders, by governors and by pupils. The opinion of each is both sought and valued so that it can be acted upon and so lead to planned improvements such as the involvement of pupils in the 'iShare' approach.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Standards of attainment in RE are in line with national expectations and often above. Many pupils demonstrate significant depth and maturity in their thinking, especially as they approach the end of Key Stage 2. Most pupils are genuinely excited by RE. Some say that it is their favourite subject and all agree that it is exciting and stimulating and that their teachers make it fun. They say that they love the opportunities to learn about other people's faith and compare it with their own. Pupils are particularly well attuned to the nature of faith and belief and to the shared

sense of spirituality that characterises the school. As a result, many pupils develop the skills of enquiry, reflection and analysis and use them to good effect in thinking about deep questions of meaning and purpose. Regardless of their own beliefs, pupils develop a deep appreciation of the nature of faith and those pupils from any religious tradition find their faith is nurtured and strengthened. As a result of this good teaching pupils acquire an excellent understanding of a range of faiths and beliefs. By time they leave the school, they have a strong knowledge of Christianity and of the key features of other main faiths. However, sometimes teachers do not sufficiently recognise the very high spiritual starting points that pupils develop through the school's Christian character and plan lessons around objectives that limit their thinking. Sometimes pupils encounter religious topics early, without opportunities to consolidate their thinking as they get older. This is being steadily addressed through the introduction of a new diocesan programme of study, which is better designed to deepen and challenge pupils' thinking than its predecessor. Nevertheless, the curriculum is rich and interesting and supported by some good visits to places of worship and input from visitors of different faiths. Parents of other faiths give their time freely to visit the school and contribute to pupils' learning. This rich experience ensures that RE makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As pupils move through the school, they acquire a depth of understanding that enables them to make connections between different aspects of faith and belief. There is an effective system of assessment so that teachers have a good knowledge of their pupils' progress and development. However, this system is somewhat limited because it does not always link to what might be expected at each age and often assumes that progress is linear rather than organic. RE is well-led by a skilled and knowledgeable subject leader who, although new to the school, is building on the good work of her predecessor. The RE Leader has established a regime of rigorous monitoring and understands the priorities for development. With the introduction of a more demanding curriculum she is helping teachers to accommodate the new expectations, although this is challenging in the context of an already high performing subject.

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

Leaders and governors share and articulate an ambitious Christian vision for the school, driven by the clear and faithful strategic leadership of the headteacher and his inspirational example. This shared vision is for a school that provides an excellent education in the context of inclusive Christian love and compassion. It is summarised in the school's vision for a 'faith centred Christian community' in which all grow and learn together in God's love. Impressive work has been done to review the school's Christian distinctiveness, review and reinforce its values and ensure they are embedded in the life of the school. This has created a school where its deeply Christian character is having a measurable impact on the personal and academic development of its pupils and where their spiritual, moral social and cultural development is promoted extremely effectively. Moreover, staff of all faiths and none are enthusiastic supporters of the school's Christian mission and are united behind the vision of its leaders. Parents say that they always feel welcomed in the school and they know that their views are valued. They have faith in the headteacher and trust his judgement. A number of parents play a key role in supporting the school through the parents' prayer group, which takes place in the vicarage and is attended by the headteacher and incumbent, which underlines the spiritual partnership of stakeholders.

Leaders and governors have strong systems for keeping the school's Christian distinctiveness and effectiveness under review and, as a result they have a clear understanding of its strengths and priorities for development. Care is taken to engage with the whole school community so that this leads directly to a shared understanding of strategies for improvement. Leaders and governors have secured excellence in the school's Christian character, highly effective and purposeful collective worship and strong leadership of RE. They also have a secure understanding of the school's future leadership needs. They know how to address them and work in partnership with local church schools and with the diocese to share expertise. There is a strong and effective partnership with the parish church which is of substantial and mutual benefit with the school using the church as a resource, and the church making regular use of the school for a Sunday congregation. The school is able to build on the global links established by the church so that pupils are actively involved with the parish in supporting work in Africa. Together, church and school are a beacon of faith to the community they serve.

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