

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Kentish Town Church of England Primary School			
Address	Islip Street, Kentish Town, London, NW5 2TU		
Date of inspection	03/10/2019	Status of school	Voluntary Aided Primary
Diocese	London	URN	100034

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

School context

Kentish Town is a primary school with 237 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage although there are significant numbers of pupils of Asian heritage. Many pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages. The school has an attached nursery and enhanced provision for autistic pupils and those with physical difficulties.

The school's Christian vision

Love, equality, compassion. This is illustrated by the parable of the Good Samaritan, which reminds us that we should serve those in need whoever they are. Such service is not offered in order to gain advantage for ourselves. 'Going the extra mile' involves commitment and putting ourselves out for someone else's benefit.

Key findings

- The headteacher, clergy and governors articulate a Christian vision for the school that maintains its commitment to excellence while being clearly and explicitly deeply Christian.
- The vision drives the whole work of the school, inspiring the warm, caring relationships between and among adults and learners. This leads to a harmonious environment in which pupils behave well, work hard and make significant progress.
- Because love, equality and compassion are central to school life, pupils develop self-confidence and an ability to look beyond themselves. They quickly learn to recognise injustice and exploitation and become fierce advocates of change, engaging with projects that offer them the opportunity to make a difference.
- Collective worship is the beating heart of the school, affirming all who attend, regardless of their faith or belief. Worship is an expression of the vision, it is engaging, heartfelt and often truly moving.
- The developing provision of Religious Education (RE) enables pupils to develop thoughtful responses to big questions of faith and belief.

Areas for development

- Clarify the school's understanding of spirituality so that pupils better understand that people can be spiritual without being religious.
- Review the RE programme of study so that it better reflects the vision of inclusion by matching coverage of faiths with pupils' developing awareness of religions and world views as they move through the school.

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

Kentish Town is a good church school and many aspects of its work are excellent. The headteacher, clergy and governors have worked together to develop a vision built on their commitment to excellence while being deeply Christian and expressed in the biblical values of love, equality, and compassion. It is explained through the parable of the Good Samaritan, who exemplified these qualities. The school promotes the United Nations Rights of the Child. However, pupils are clear that, while these are their rights, the Good Samaritan represents their responsibility to serve others. Governors and clergy are active in school life, ensuring that the vision is lived out through policy and practice. Working closely with school leaders and diocesan officers, they have effective systems for reviewing the school's Christian distinctiveness. As a result, pupils of different faiths and backgrounds are all welcomed and nurtured. Pupils making use of the extended provision are no less a part of the school than their peers. Because adults and pupils live out the principles of the vision, every child recognises that they are safe, valued and special. This gives them confidence in their teachers and motivation to learn. This is seen in the low levels of absence and high levels of pupil engagement. The curriculum is broad and balanced, enriched by exceptionally good provision of music and sport, which enable pupils to flourish beyond school. As a result, all pupils, including the most disadvantaged, make significant progress, academically and personally. They enjoy coming to school, behave impeccably and work hard, achieving standards often higher than those expected nationally. A shared understanding of spirituality enables pupils to explore deep philosophical and ethical questions. However, because the school's interpretation is too closely linked to the wider area of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, its impact is sometimes limited by the sense that spirituality requires a religious response.

Because love, equality and compassion are woven throughout the school, pupils develop generous, warm-hearted attitudes. They say, helping others and being kind are simply expected because everyone is included. They recognise inequality, exploitation or disadvantage when they encounter them, becoming fierce advocates for justice. For example, they initiated campaigns to reduce plastic use and save energy, engaging governors in discussions about solar panels. Further, following the school's participation in a gender equality project, pupils became deeply engaged in planning events and raising funds. The school has links with local and national charities as well as one in Sierra Leone for which pupils raise enough funds to feed and educate several children a year.

The school is both diverse and inclusive. It draws pupils from a wide range of backgrounds and faiths and, through its extended provision, a much wider than average range of educational attainment. However, its vision ensures that all are treated with dignity and respect and bullying is vanishingly rare. Parents and governors refer to the 'magic' of the inclusive ethos and the way that barriers to learning and inclusion are removed or minimised. The school has a carefully structured programme of relationships education so that pupils value all types of family structures. Great care is paid to supporting the mental health of pupils and adults, with trained staff available in school. As a result, pupils respect themselves and each other and know where to go for help.

Collective worship is the heartbeat of the school and an articulation of its vision. It is a central point of each day, anchoring the school in its Christian distinctiveness. It is carefully planned by the headteacher and incumbent around a series of themes, with some suggested by pupils. Everyone in the school looks forward to it and the committed teamwork by leaders, staff, clergy and pupils is remarkable. As a result, worship has a real sense of being a high quality, affirming experience that leaves adults and pupils still commenting on it later in the day. Excellent use is made of a simple liturgy and Christian symbols so that pupils experience worship that is biblical, trinitarian and Anglican. Occasional use is made of the parish church but most worship takes place in the school. This includes a termly, priest-led Eucharist, which unites the life of the church with the work of the school. What makes worship exceptional is the way it reflects the whole school community, as people of different faiths and beliefs come together in a celebration that is joyous and inclusive. The standard of music is outstanding and, through the school's excellent wider music work, pupils often make high quality instrumental contributions. Pupils sing tunefully and enthusiastically, sometimes using Makaton signing which helps those who find reading difficult. Pupils welcome the many opportunities for them to lead aspects of worship and, through personal discussion with the headteacher, contribute to its evaluation and effectiveness. Prayer has an important place so that pupils quickly understand its nature and purpose through reading or writing their own prayers. The inclusive nature of worship offers those who belong to another faith or practice, an opportunity to join in prayers in their own traditions. In this, they are supported by adults of that faith who ensure that prayer is a reflection of the act of worship and not separate. Adults are as engaged as pupils, and frequently comment on how uplifting it is to be a part of this truly worshipping community, celebrating the mystery of faith.

RE is always linked to the key themes of the school's vision. It is skilfully led by a knowledgeable subject leader, who is relatively new to the role. Since the last inspection, she has introduced a new syllabus. This meets the expectations of the Church of England Statement of Entitlement by teaching pupils about Christianity and a range of other world faiths. Since the last inspection, pupils understand the links between Christian teaching and the United Nations Rights of the Child. There are also more opportunities for them to visit local faith centres. Working with diocesan officers, the subject leader is enabling classroom staff to access training that extends their subject knowledge. Teachers make good use of a recently introduced system of assessment that helps them to plan appropriate next steps for their pupils. There is strong subject provision for the youngest children and these improvements are working through the school. Through good teaching, pupils leave the school with a confident understanding of Christianity and key points of the other faiths studied. However, when faiths are introduced and developed does not always match pupils' growing thinking skills. This does not fully meet the needs of the older pupils or promote their wider thinking about faith, religions and worldviews.



ONLY

The effectiveness of RE is Good

The subject leader effectively supports and monitors teaching to confirm that it is consistently good. She is enabling teachers to ensure that RE reflects the school's vision to enable pupils to flourish. As a result, pupils, including the most vulnerable make similarly good progress to that made in other core subjects and achieve similar standards.

Headteacher

James Humphries

Inspector's name and number

John Viner NS144