

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Archbishop Tenison's Church of England School

Selborne Road, Croydon CR0 5JQ	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Southwark
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Croydon
Name of multi-academy trust / federation	NA
Dates of inspection	27 & 28 February 2018
Date of last inspection	September 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Secondary VA 101811
Headteacher	Richard Parrish
Inspector's name and number	Angela Smith 925

School context

Archbishop Tenison's is a smaller than average mixed comprehensive school, but with a large sixth form. It is oversubscribed and in 2018 has increased to 20% of places being open to all. Other places are allocated on the basis of membership of Christian churches. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) is just above that of schools nationally. The school's foundation traces back over 300 years. Since the previous denominational inspection it has taken part in a Christian-ethos secondary school project, 'Lessons in Spiritual Development' by Canterbury and Warwick Universities.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Archbishop Tenison's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The visionary and biblically rooted leadership of the school explicitly guided by the headteacher and his senior leadership team.
- Diverse opportunities and expressions of worship that have a significant impact on the school community and are highly valued by pupils, staff, parents and governors.
- An embedded and dynamic focus on Christian theology in the curriculum.
- The vibrant Christian community in action, where pupils and staff are cared for as individuals.

Areas to improve

- To ensure consistency in best practice in religious education (RE) for all pupils.
- To secure long term leadership capacity in RE.
- As an outward looking Christian church school, to build on established strengths in worship and Christian distinctiveness through increased partnership in sharing proven effective approaches with other schools.

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

Archbishop Tenison's has deeply embedded Christian values which significantly impact on its life and work. The school motto of 'Academic excellence for everyone in a Christian community' underpins all it does and is prominent in all documentation, with staff, pupils and parents articulating its consistent application in the life of the school. It is an inclusive Christian community where strong relationships enable new strategies to emerge and make a difference. There is a breadth of Christian traditions amongst the staff and a diverse heritage of pupils which enriches the school. The school size means staff and pupils know each other well and have positive relationships. The headteacher takes time to individually meet each Year 11 pupil, encouraging them in their own decision making and to consider their views and progress.

There are clear connections between the school's Christian character and its academic purposes where staff state 'we know why we do what we do' and 'the culture of the school is theology at every angle'. Likewise, parents share in a good understanding of the school's ethos and mission. For example, they passionately describe the school as giving their children 'a wider spirituality for life'. The RE curriculum has a clear focus on diversity to which pupils enthusiastically add their own perspectives. The generous curriculum time afforded to RE at Key Stage 3 gives pupils a secure foundation and the wider school benefits from high standards of religious literacy.

Shared planning approaches recognise the varied contributions of all staff. To ensure all pupils achieve their God given potential, the school rigorously reviews pupil progress and attendance, swiftly identifying and responding to any areas where performance has been below national average. Staff and pupils are supported to increase confidence and wellbeing alongside improving academic performance, reflecting the school motto. The recently reviewed and regularly monitored personal and social development programme is appreciated by staff and pupils and develops pupils in their ability to articulate their values, explore change and consider their wider influence in the world today. Pupils can explain how the programme has supported them in understanding what it means to be in a Christian school alongside how to practically implement values like self-control. The Christian ethos is central to all systems and practices to support SEND pupils. This is aided by having a school chaplain as the link governor. Promoting good mental health for all is a particular vision for the SEND department with the focus rooted in a biblical vision from Philippians.

Pupils identify ways they have shaped the school, with significant independence encouraged in the Sixth Form where they have guided decisions including a new water fountain and the choice of caterers. The wide range of extracurricular activities that staff and pupils engage in helps support the pupil experience of varied spiritual, moral, social and cultural education (SMSC). Sixth Form students value the weekly opportunity for community and sports activities built into their timetables. One gave an example of how volunteering combined with staff individual support had changed his approach from 'what can the school do for me to what can I do for the school.'

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is highly significant making a central and positive impact throughout the school community. It is given a high priority and makes a major contribution to the spiritual development of staff and pupils. It is clearly planned but also regularly reviewed and developed by pupils, staff and governors. It reflects the school's rich Anglican roots, reflecting on important times in the church year and equipping pupils to access a diverse range of Christian practice. Pupils meaningfully engage with the centrality of Jesus in Christianity and the concept of Trinity. The accessibility and pupil ownership of the leadership and direction of worship is shown by pupils regularly taking part and the School Council's enthusiasm to shape and review what takes place. Bible teachings are used inclusively, influence school priorities and are evident in all meetings and school events. Parents clearly identify that this is part of what drew them to bring their children to this school and how this relevant application of the Bible for today is part of what makes the school distinctive. Pupils and staff refer to previous assembly themes and the positive impact they have had. Pupils identify that the school 'does not force belief' upon them but instead 'it is embedded in the school's way of life'.

The regular visits from the two chaplains, from different local churches, are highly effective and cover different aspects of school life. Strong relationships are built and pupils see the application of faith and spirituality in many settings. The annual retreats for each tutor and their tutor group build the pupil experience of inclusivity and varied types of worship in action. This is a way the school's worship builds a strong unified foundation for its diverse community. The Christian Union and a Bible study group are supported by further local church linked groups, introducing pupils to further diversity of approach.

Staff highlight that worship is 'real', with prayer as a natural part of school experience, for example, at times of challenges being faced by the school community or Year 11 pupils feeling comfortable to openly pray together before examinations. Since its launch from the school tercentenary focus, the effective practice of a daily prayer opportunity, open to all, has been taking place for five minutes each lunchtime. This demonstrates the school's

passion to have prayer at the heart of all it does. It is facilitated by a member of support staff and led by different people each day, showing the inclusivity of different members of the school community leading worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious education is at the heart of the school curriculum, with innovative and effective teaching and learning leading to pupils developing strong religious literacy. Other subject leaders identify how this enriches study in their curriculum areas. There is significant curriculum time, with religious studies and theology discretely taught in Key Stage 3. Pupils benefit from being introduced to a range of world faiths, alongside more in depth studies. Assessment approaches follow the school system and include dialogue through marking and feedback, meaning most pupils have a clear understanding of their progress in RE and how to improve. There is attention to Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith and pupils identify that they do well in the subject because their views are treated as 'valid' and it is a subject that 'widens knowledge'. This is evidenced in the positive atmosphere of participation in lessons and the questioning skills that are being developed. Pupils consider that RE is a subject that supports them in scrutinising their own views taking them 'out of your comfort zone in a good way'.

Analysis of progress has led to collaborative working between RE and the SEND department to support GCSE pupils. Pupils are guided by their teachers in making improvement through directed learning tasks and this is building pupil confidence. An experienced link governor makes annual visits to the department and his involvement in RE staff appointments ensures continuity and clear monitoring and communication between the teaching team and governors. Currently RE has an Acting Head of Department, alongside some new entrants to teaching who are quickly growing in confidence and benefitting from a carefully developed plan of professional development and support. Senior leaders are managing this period of change through meeting regularly with RE staff and are familiar faces in lessons. Governors have a schedule in place for confirming more long term RE leadership capacity.

Chaplains contribute to the RE curriculum, for example taking lessons on the roots of the Eucharist. This positively contributes to pupils exploring the wider Christian character of the school.

Pupil enjoyment is indicated through the high standards in public examination results, with GCSE results being some of the strongest in the school and above average nationally. The subject attracts considerable numbers in the Sixth Form and is one of the largest subject groups, showing how highly it is regarded. Significant numbers continue their studies at a range of institutions, showing that RE is fostering a desire to delve into the subject more deeply. The GCSE course builds on a passion for Biblical studies introduced in Year 7 and 8. It supports pupils further in their Biblical literacy and it is a part of the GCSE course where pupils have been particularly successful. The Sixth Form core RE provision is under review and therefore currently students outside the A level groups are not receiving their full entitlement.

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

Inspirational leaders and innovative chaplaincy underpin and clearly guide this dynamic school. Parents greatly value the way leaders are consistently strong role models using scriptural verses in the learning overviews for the year and prayer at all meetings. Professional development for all, including governors, is carefully considered, with a 'focus on what matters' rooted within the Christian identity of the school. Changes in the leadership and staffing of RE are carefully managed. Future leadership of church schools is an increasingly natural consequence of the outward looking Christian focus. The school fulfils priorities identified in the National Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education and with the execution of planned core Sixth Form away days, RE and collective worship meets statutory requirements.

As an expression of its Christian vision there have been innovative changes such as the restructuring of Governor committees, including forming the Ethos and Pastoral Care committee, chaired by a school chaplain. Leaders reflect, review and seek to constantly improve, with a mark of the school being its willingness to develop fresh approaches. The importance of attendance, which has been thoroughly explored by governors, is clearly communicated and understood by parents who appreciate this school priority. Through their central role in self-evaluation and review, the minutes of governor meetings show robust and thorough questioning and a drive to work with school leaders and wider stakeholders to see all pupils achieve their full potential. There is a close partnership with the Diocese and a willingness to listen and explore the best ways forward to achieve positive outcomes for all.

The Christian vision goes beyond the motto and is the basis for school direction. Self-evaluation shows integrity and a willingness to ask difficult questions and strive for continuous improvement. Alongside this there is a focus on prayer and discernment to ensure high standards alongside the priority of 'well rounded pupils'. This is demonstrated in the school's emphasis on SMSC, a broad curriculum built around a priority for RE and meaningful collective worship. The school seeks to be a blessing to its pupils and to its wider partners. With the active support of parents, it makes a meaningful wider contribution through various local, national and global communities.