

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Trent Church of England Primary School

Church Way, Cockfosters, London EN4 9JH

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Diocese

London

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Good

Local authority

Barnet

Date/s of inspection

23 November 2016

Date of last inspection

October 2011

Type of school and unique reference number

101328

Headteacher

Louise Yarwood

Inspector's name and number

John Viner NS144

School context

Trent CE Primary School is a smaller than average primary school located in Cockfosters and serving the parish of Christchurch. The school also benefits from a relationship with Oak Hill Theological College. Around half of its 208 pupils are of minority ethnic heritage, with a significant proportion of pupils from the Greek Orthodox tradition. However only an average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. An average number of pupils have special educational needs and a lower than average proportion is eligible for additional government funding. Around two thirds of pupils attend church. Pupils make excellent progress and, at the end of Key Stage 2, standards are well above average. The school was successfully inspected by Ofsted in the week before this inspection.

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

- Christian values underpin the school and are evident in every aspect of its life and work. They inspire the excellent compassionate relationships between and among adults and pupils and demonstrate the school's motto, 'serve one another in love'.
- A golden thread of prayer is woven throughout the school and provides a context for worship. The free, enthusiastic and deeply spiritual participation of pupils in extemporary prayer is a feature of worship rarely encountered and characterises this prayerful and worshipping community.
- The school's Christian ethos informs its policies, enriches its curriculum and makes religious education (RE) central to its work.
- The headteacher's strong, faithful Christian leadership leads to high expectations among all stakeholders so that academic excellence is matched with spiritual development and the nurture of faith.
- The strong threefold links between the school, the parish church and Oak Hill College makes for an effective partnership that is a beacon of hope, faith and belief to the community it serves.

Areas to improve

- Extend teachers' skills in religious education (RE) so that there are more opportunities for pupils to ask deep questions and deepen their thinking.
- Strengthen teachers' awareness of those pupils' who are already capable of thinking deeply about spiritual issues so that marking helps them to extend their understanding of faith and so better contribute to their spiritual development.

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

The school's Christian ethos is summarised in its motto, 'serve one another in love', but this is more than mere rhetoric. Explicit Christian values of Love, Justice, Forgiveness, Generosity & Gratitude, Truth & Integrity and Hope underpin the school and are lived out in its work. They are known and readily articulated by parents and pupils who recognise that they are what make the school a compassionate and caring learning community where people look out for each other. This extraordinary sense of mutual care and compassion is immediately evident. Parents say that 'this is what makes Trent stand out from other local schools'. Irrespective of their faith or beliefs, pupils are very clear that this is a Christian school and are proud of the way that its values are implemented through their lives.

The school's Christian character motivates the excellent, warm and compassionate relationships between and among adults and learners and is reflected in pupils' excellent and respectful behaviour. Pupils say that conflict is uncommon and bullying extremely rare. They say that that this is a place where they feel very safe, valued and special. The school's Christian character shapes its approach to all aspects of its operation. Because of this, pupils are keen to come to school, attend regularly and work hard. This means that they achieve high standards, both academically and in their personal development.

The school's distinctive Christian character has a foundational impact on the successful way in which it promotes pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development so that, when they learn about British values, they know that they are rooted in the Christian ethos that is the school's lifeblood. As a result, there is a highly developed understanding of spirituality throughout the school and pupils develop a confidence in asking questions. They use the language of faith with maturity. They appreciate that they are part of a diverse world in which Christianity is one of many world faiths. They are excited by RE, understand its importance in their development and the life of their community and that it plays a key role in the school's Christian character.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

This school is a worshipping and prayerful community where great value is placed on the centrality of prayer and worship to school life. More than a separate event, the daily act of collective worship is an ongoing celebration of faith in which the whole community shares. Irrespective of their personal faith or belief, all adults and learners are affirmed by worship, regard it as an important part of their lives and know what it means to be a person of faith. Worship is of high quality because it so deeply embedded in the school's Christian character. Pupils come to worship enthusiastically, they participate willingly and behave reverently. This is, for them, a key part of their day and an essential part of their developing spiritual journey. Parents say that it builds in their children a sense of who they are, developing resilience and faith. Pupils of all faiths value worship and say that it helps them to draw close to God. Staff say that worship supports the development of the Christian values that are 'embedded in everything'.

Worship is uncompromisingly Christian and Trinitarian, rooted in the person of Jesus. It is carefully planned in partnership with the parish church, around the school's Christian values and the church's year. This joint working is one of its great strengths. Regular input from the vicar and members of the parish team enrich worship and help pupils to see the school as part of the whole Anglican worshipping community. The links with Oak Hill Theological College and the regular input of its students add significant capacity to the leadership of worship. This is of mutual benefit because pupils like the freshness this brings and the students hone their skills of leading school worship. Pupils also contribute to many aspects of worship, through organisation and technical support, role-playing, reading and praying.

Prayer is not simply a part of worship; it provides a living context which infuses every aspect of school life so that worship becomes part of prayer. From the moment they enter the school, pupils quickly learn about the nature and purpose of prayer so that it becomes their daily experience. They develop a mature confidence in personal, private and public prayer. Their free, enthusiastic and deeply spiritual participation in extemporaneous prayer is a feature of worship rarely encountered in this context. Their deep understanding of prayer is illustrated by a recent visit by the Bishop, during which pupils spontaneously and independently asked him if they could pray for him! Parents report that their children bring prayer into their homes and that this enriches domestic life.

In addition to being well-planned and coordinated, worship is also carefully monitored by leaders, governors and by pupils, who are invited to contribute their thoughts. This creates opportunities for planned improvement that keeps worship crisp, interesting and engaging to all stakeholders.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

RE is given high status in the school and pupils know that it is an important element in their learning. All pupils make good progress in RE so that they secure standards that match those achieved in other core subjects, which are at least in line with national expectations. The work in RE books is presented to the same or better standard as the work in other subjects. Pupils are excited by RE, they say that teachers make it enjoyable because 'we do really fun activities'. They develop a range of skills to help them analyse, interpret and reflect on what they learn. However, while RE has a key place in the school's provision, it is not yet outstanding because, by applying the systematic approach that the school has used so effectively to raise standards in other subjects, teachers can limit pupils' responses and learning in RE. Because the school is so successful in developing pupils' spiritual thinking overall, their level of spiritual confidence and maturity is not always recognised in matching lessons to their starting points. As a result, while teaching is very effective, there are not always enough opportunities to engage pupils with the deep questions that they can ask and so their responses are limited by the structure of the work.

There is a well-developed assessment system that enables teachers accurately to measure pupils' learning against a range of developmental statements but the guidance given to pupils about the way that they can extend their understanding does not always help their spiritual development or deepen their understanding of faith. Nevertheless, the RE curriculum is extensive and interesting, enriched by visits to places of worship and visitors who speak about their faith. The work being done to link RE with other subjects is a very significant strength because this underlines the way that faith and belief are not limited to a single academic area. As a result, pupils leave the school with a very good foundation of Christian understanding and a developing knowledge of and real interest in other key faiths and beliefs. As a result, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted at a high level.

RE is skilfully led by a knowledgeable subject leader who systematically and effectively monitors the way it is taught, providing good help and guidance to teachers, especially with the implementation of a new programme of study. She has been ably supported by the incumbent, who provides high quality staff training that helps teachers to extend their subject knowledge. Because she has been effectively and strongly supported by Diocesan officers, the subject leader is well-informed on developments within RE; she understands the key priorities for improvement and plans steps to address them.

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

The headteacher, key leaders and governors not only share and articulate an ambitious Christian vision for the school, but consistently and confidently live it out in their actions. This vision is driving the school on a road of continuous improvement where faith is at the centre and Christian values are paramount. This is understood by parents and pupils so that all stakeholders are committed to the roles which they play in making the vision reality. The headteacher describes this as 'synchronicity of vision' and it is evident in all aspects of the school. This is a vision that inspires and motivates the whole school community and has a significant impact on the academic, personal and spiritual development of all its pupils.

Leaders and governors have a thorough and deep-seated understanding of the school's performance and its Christian distinctiveness and there are excellent systems for keeping this under review. As a result of skilled and thoughtful analysis, governors are able to make finely nuanced strategic decisions and understand precisely the future needs of the school. They pay close attention to the professional development of staff, including preparation for future leadership and regard the headteacher's support for other church schools as part of their service to the wider Anglican community. They ensure that the school's Christian ethos is evident in its curriculum and in its operational policies so that 'serving one another in love' is evident in everything. Parents say that, as a result, their children follow the examples set them 'to form their character, their friendships and manage themselves in their community and beyond.'

The strong and effective partnership with the parish church strengthens the work of the school and help pupils to widen their compassion beyond the school, for example through their active involvement in the church's support of work in Uganda, which the pupils refer to with pride. Staff report that, 'the links between school and church are amazing' and pupils benefit from attending the Bible Club that the church runs. The involvement of Oak Hill Theological College adds further capacity to the school's Christian distinctiveness. This strong triple partnership is of mutual benefit to the school, the parish and to the whole community which they serve in love.