

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

### The Minster Nursery and Infant Voluntary Aided School

Warrington Road Croydon Surrey CR0 4BH	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Southwark</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Croydon
Name of multi-academy trust/federation	N/A
Date of inspection	4 July 2018
Date of last inspection	11/12 June 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided Primary 101791
Headteacher	Stephanie Edmonds
Inspector's name and number	Jenny Earp 288

#### School context

The Minster Nursery and Infants is a large 4 form-entry school with 407 pupils on roll. Since the last inspection, the school has undergone significant changes, including the appointment of a new headteacher in September 2013. The school became voluntary aided in 2015 and changed its name from The Parish Church to The Minster. Major building work has extended the school to accommodate its growing intake. Pupils are from a wide range of different ethnic backgrounds and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than the national average.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of The Minster Nursery and Infant as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The headteacher, governors and staff all share the same Christian vision and very secure systems are in place for monitoring the school's effectiveness and distinctiveness.
- Sustained improvement in Religious Education (RE) since the last inspection is driving up standards and makes an important contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of all pupils.
- The strong partnership with the local church and its community, despite a period without an incumbent, enhances and strengthens the Christian character of the school.
- There is great care, guidance and support for every individual underpinned by explicit Christian values, based on the Fruits of the Spirit.

#### Areas to improve

- Create a quiet, reflective space in the outdoor environment where pupils can experience a sense of peace in order to celebrate and deepen their personal and collective spirituality.
- Embed the recently adopted Understanding Christianity project with the aim to enhance the RE curriculum further and enable pupils to understand Christianity as a living world faith.

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

The school's Christian values, based on the nine Fruits of the Spirit, are woven into the fabric of the school and everyone at the school recognises the major impact they have on the daily life and achievement of the pupils. As a result, the Christian ethos at The Minster is very strong and visible in all aspects of school life. Academic standards at the school are mostly in-line with national expectations and a percentage of pupils also achieve above average levels and all make good progress. This is due to high expectations, good teaching and the strong belief that every child deserves the chance to shine and fulfil their true potential, regardless of their backgrounds or starting points. Considerable changes have taken place since the last inspection, but the headteacher and governors have ensured that the Christian character has remained strong during this transitional time. This can be seen in the way the school goes the extra mile to show compassion and give support to all pupils and in particular to families who are experiencing hardships. For instance, the school provides a food bank to needy families and the school's family liaison officer is proactive in supporting pupils and parents in a number of ways in order to assist them in their difficulties. A high priority is placed on the emotional health and wellbeing of each pupil and all are cherished as God's children. Consequently, pupils feel safe and secure and are able to take full advantage of the excellent educational opportunities offered to them at the Minster School. The Ducklings Nurture Group, in particular, exemplifies this caring approach. The Christian character and values of the school have a significant impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils. For instance, the rich RE curriculum, and special themed weeks such as 'Many Cultures, One Family', celebrate pupils' different cultural heritages and beliefs in a school where fifty-seven languages are spoken. Pupils speak positively about their achievements and have regular opportunities to engage in high quality experiences that develop a personal spirituality. For instance, a home learning project, 'Faith Communities', encouraged pupils to take photographs or create a piece of artwork that reflected their own faith and identity for an exhibition for Inter Faith Week. As a result, RE plays an important role in determining the Christian character of the school and pupils have a high degree of understanding and respect for diversity, both within the church and in other faith communities.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

Collective worship takes place daily for all pupils, setting the tone for the whole day and enhancing the spirituality of all who take part. Worship follows a well-structured programme, planned by the clergy and the leadership team, overseen by the Faith Group. The programme is expressly Christian in nature, with a strong focus on Jesus Christ, following the seasons of the church year and key events in school life. The themes used inspire a high level of spiritual and moral reflection, allowing pupils to take responsibility for their own actions. This is achieved by the use of Bible stories, in particular by parables such as the Talents, the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan. The inspirational and inclusive worship style reflects the Anglican tradition of Croydon Minster, providing opportunities to reflect on key Christian beliefs and Anglican practice. For example, each act of worship begins with the lighting of a candle to signify the presence of Jesus, followed by a welcome, a penitential rite and an absolution. Through the Anglican nature of worship, pupils are developing an age-appropriate appreciation of the Christian belief in the Holy Trinity. Worship is conducted by a range of leaders, including local clergy, senior leaders and teachers. Because of this, pupils are offered a rich and varied experience of worship. The Faith Group monitor worship effectively and have ensured that the areas for development from the previous inspection have been addressed. Specifically, parents are now afforded more opportunities to participate in collective worship and policy documentation has been reviewed to reflect current practice in school. Feedback gathered from a range of stakeholders confirms that worship has a positive impact on the life of the school community. Pupils understand the purpose of prayer and reflection and this can be seen in their contribution to worship and in the thoughtful prayers they write themselves. The recent Community Prayer Space Project held at the school demonstrates the value the school places on prayer. Each classroom has a quiet, reflective space where children can pray or reflect, strengthening further the parallels with church and school as corresponding places of worship. **A similar space, where pupils can experience a sense of peace, is not available as part of the current outdoor provision.** Pupils are confident in planning and leading acts of worship and are led effectively in this by the 'Minster Lights', a group of pupils who are members of the school's Faith Group.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

Since the last inspection there has been a greater focus on RE with a determined whole-school commitment to improving the standards of teaching and learning. There is an exemplary understanding of the purpose of RE throughout the school and the scheme of work and curriculum are implemented well. The RE programme provides opportunities for pupils to understand and make links between beliefs and practices of a range of faiths. For

example, the school site is currently shared with the Krishna Avanti School and their expertise is valued and used well to enhance learning about the Hindu faith. Pupils are provided with opportunities to have a variety of responses to RE, including music, drama, dance and art. In particular Art Days always have a spiritual theme, such as 'Angels: God is Love'. All staff recognise and embrace their role in their continual endeavour to raise the levels of progress and attainment for all pupils. RE is exceptionally well led and managed by the experienced leader, who demonstrates a high level of subject expertise, together with the vision to realise ambitious expectations and improvement. This is illustrated in the way in which she led the school to achieve the gold standard in the RE Quality Mark Award recently. Progress and achievement are outstanding because children respond positively to the good quality teaching of RE. As a result, pupils are inspired, have a strong appetite for learning and say they enjoy taking part in RE lessons because 'they are fun and we learn about Jesus'. Teachers set high expectations and children achieve well in RE, with all children making good progress from their own starting point. There are regular checks on pupil progress with learning walks, observations of lessons, scrutiny of samples of work and end of year assessments providing evidence that all RE teaching is good or better. Consequently, the subject leader is able to monitor progress and attainment in RE effectively. Clear links made to the Fruits of the Spirit and to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are intrinsic to the RE curriculum and have a significant impact on the pupils. This can be seen in the way pupils are able to interpret the meaning of parables that often influences their own personal reflections, behaviour and the choices they make every day. Visits from parents from other world religions give valuable, personal insight into their beliefs and traditions. The school is a pilot school in the diocese for the 'Understanding Christianity' project, which is at an early stage of development.

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

The headteacher's outstanding leadership, together with the governors' support and staff teamwork, ensures that the school's Christian vision is strong with excellent outcomes for all pupils. They all articulate the impact of the Fruits of the Spirit on the lives and well-being of their pupils and on the whole life of the school. There is a warm, nurturing and inclusive Christian ethos at the school, which staff describe as, 'just a great feeling you get at this school, which you don't get at other schools'. Since the last inspection, the Faith Group has ensured that there is a strong focus on excellent collective worship and RE, leading to highly effective practice in both areas. Alongside the governing body, they keep performance closely under review and help create a shared understanding of the school's Christian vision and purpose. As a result, leaders have a clear understanding of the school's performance and Christian distinctiveness. Effective self-evaluation confirms that there are strategies in place to maintain a strong focus on the needs of all the pupils. In particular, the whole curriculum is informed by the school's specific Christian values, which include love, joy, peace and self-control. This Christian vision has a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and attitudes, as well as their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are strong, valuable partnerships with Croydon Minster Church, parents and the local community. The contribution of the clergy and church members to school life is beneficial because of their frequent involvement in collective worship, the Faith Group and in their roles as link governors. Regular visits to Croydon Minster enable pupils to be familiar with the environment of the church and provide them with an understanding of the Christian faith. Parents are very supportive of the Christian values and ethos of the school, particularly enjoying the opportunities to worship with their children at the church. They say that any problems or concerns are dealt with by staff efficiently, promptly and with compassion. One parent remarked, 'This school is exceptionally brilliant'. Links with the diocese are robust, enabling staff to develop as leaders in church schools by accessing quality training. The school has a philosophy of supporting 'leadership at all levels' and this has significant benefits for the current leadership at the school. Community links are strong as demonstrated by the recent Community Prayer Space Project involving other local schools, members of the Minster Church, the Salvation Army and the Croydon Refugee Centre. A member of the clergy said that this initiative was 'extremely successful in bringing everyone together, to share and recognise the gifts, struggles and love that makes us what we are'.

The school more than meets the statutory arrangements for RE and collective worship.