

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Chrysostom's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	
Lincoln Grove, Chorlton-on-Medlock, Manchester, M13 0DX	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Manchester
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Manchester
Date of inspection	3 November 2016
Date of last inspection	December 2011
School's unique reference number	105491
Executive Headteacher	Gareth Elswood
Inspector's name and number	Nigel Castledine (652)

School context

St Chrysostom's is a larger than average primary school. It serves an inner city community with a diverse cultural and social community where many families experience difficult life circumstances. From the range of faiths of the community, Christianity and Islam are the most prevalent in the school.

There is a higher than average number of children for whom English is not their first language. The percentages of disadvantaged children, those with special educational needs or disability are also higher than average.

The school is working with St John's CofE School, Longsight to initiate a federation with a recently appointed executive headteacher.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Chrysostom's as a Church of England school are good

- The strong Christian ethos of St Chrysostom's embraces the children's diversity of faith, ensuring a harmony of respect for all beliefs, cultures and life-styles within the school.
- The children's positive behaviour and caring attitudes are modelled for them by the supportive interaction of all members of the staff team.
- Every child is affirmed and cared for as an individual, created in God's image and therefore of infinite worth.

Areas to improve

- Involve all stakeholders in identifying and celebrating the core Christian values of St Chrysostom's, in order to give clarity and resonance to the gospel teachings that underpin the life of the school and its interface with other world faiths.
- Include formal evaluation of the impact of the Christian distinctiveness of St Chrysostom's as part of the governing board's regular scrutiny of the school's provision, to ensure it continues to inspire the highest standards of education and nurture.
- As part of the ongoing development of worship, extend children's involvement in planning and leading all its aspects, whilst also taking part in its evaluation alongside a range of other stakeholders.

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

The school's motto 'Brothers and sisters respecting each other, creating the future generation' is borne out in every aspect of school life and its curriculum. It is supported by the strong promotion of Christian tolerance and inclusive caring. It is underpinned by the gospel-based beliefs of the school, which focus on positive outcomes for every child, irrespective of their faith or culture. Over time, the school has built up a wide range of faith, ethos and learning values, but their impact is reduced by their complexity.

Because the school strives to meet each pupil's individual needs, children are able to enjoy their learning and want to attend regularly. Data shows that the school attendance meets national expectations, and persistent absence is closely tracked. Children's many achievements are celebrated regularly in school worship. The children speak positively about their successes, their strengths, and their aspirations for the future. One child commented, 'Working hard in school means we can have happy lives'.

The school provides many opportunities for the children to explore their own spirituality, including multi-faith spiritual areas around the school. Many of the children attend local religious centres, including the parish church, mosque, gudwara and temple. The children's learning from their own places of worship is an important factor in their spiritual development that enriches the Christian character of the school.

Religious Education (RE) enriches the children's understanding of Christian values and the teachings of Jesus that underpin them. The study of other major world faiths within RE ensures that the children are also well informed about the beliefs and faith customs of their school family. RE's influence is increased by its careful integration within other key areas of the school's curriculum.

The school's behaviour policy helps the children to grow into well-behaved young people with a positive appreciation of diversity and difference. Many children choose to show Christian service, willing to give their time to help, care for and guide others. The children have a strong sense of right and wrong. In the words of the school, the children 'ignore past wrongs and care about the future', indicating their grasp of the Christian value of forgiveness. They also show Christian concern for local, national and global communities through their support for community activities and charitable giving.

The children's experiences and understanding of different cultures and faiths lead to a harmonious school community where each individual appreciates and cares for others. These positive relationships are modelled for the children by the considerate attitudes and professional relationships of all members of the school staff. An older child reflected, 'At St Chrysostom's, everyone treats each other equally'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship at St Chrysostom's is distinctively Christian, but also seeks to meet the spiritual needs of the whole school community. It is carefully planned to be accessible to those of other major world faiths and those of no particular belief. Whilst worship is clearly gospel-centred, it includes due reference to the special days and sacred writings of the faiths in the local community.

Anglican tradition in school worship assists all present to grow in understanding of Christian customs and rituals of worship. Following the church's year, major Christian celebrations are reflected in school worship themes. The festival of Pentecost provides opportunities for the children to consider appropriate aspects of the Holy Trinity.

Innovative worship, known as Munamato (a Shona word for a friendly gathering), also takes place in school. It provides a regular time of quiet reflection and prayer. Led by the parish church clergy, it has a multi-faith focus and has significant impact on the children's spirituality. One child considered, 'Our school's got many faiths but when we pray together, we respect all faith'. Munamato provides friendly, informal opportunities for children to worship alongside members of St Chrysostom's church congregation and the school's staff.

Leaders of worship include the school's staff, church clergy, visitors, parents and other faith leaders. Worship plans integrate a focus on Christian values with their Biblical links to the teachings of Jesus. Class teachers regularly extend age-appropriate understanding of worship themes through classroom discussion. Planning also includes a point for reflection which impacts directly on the message and meaning of the worship. This helps those present to have a focus for meditation which will assist their journey towards and beyond the threshold of faith. A small number of children have recently become Champions of Worship. They have led successful aspects of worship which have been evaluated very positively by other children. Such evaluations of worship by a range of stakeholders are not yet regular and systematic.

Prayer and reflection are integral parts of all worship, as well as taking place informally and as a class during the school day. Children are encouraged to write their own prayers, some for use in worship. The times of prayer and reflection have impact for all faiths. One Muslim child stated, 'Allah talks to us in our hearts when we reflect'.

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

Detailed regular analysis of pupil data by school leaders includes systematic tracking of children's progress and attainment. This shows good pupil progress in Early Years and Key Stage 1. However it also indicates that Key Stage 2 pupil outcomes slipped below national expectations in 2016. Senior leaders have therefore taken targeted action with the aim of rapid and lasting improvements.

The school has been through a period of changing leadership over the past two years. Whilst the school has been without a substantive headteacher, progress has still been made by the leadership teams in moving developments forward. An ongoing partnership has been forged with St John's CofE School, Longsight, also in the parish of St Chrysostom. This is planned to become a hard federation between the two schools with mutually advantageous opportunities for joint working and staff development.

Stability for the school has been overseen by the governing board which has guided through the necessary changes for the future success of St Chrysostom's in meeting changing educational and pastoral requirements. Whilst the governing board has a thorough knowledge of the school, it does not formally evaluate the impact of its Christian distinctiveness.

The school has acted effectively on the development points from the last inspection, and meets legal requirements for its collective worship and RE.

Links between the school, the local community and the local church are mutually supportive. The children make educational visits to St Chrysostom's church as well as the places of worship of other faiths. They also worship with their families in St Chrysostom's for Christian festivals. Many families share in special services such as the baptism and confirmation of children from the school. The sustained ministry of the parish priest is greatly valued in the school and many children speak of him as a respected friend.

Diocesan links are celebrated by the Year 6 children taking part in the annual leavers' service in Manchester cathedral. Staff and governor training, professional support and guidance, provided by the diocese, has helped the school to progress, whilst also developing its partnership with St John's.

Parents are complimentary about the support given by the school, particularly in accessing help and guidance for children who experience barriers to their learning. These strong home-school partnerships enrich and promote the children's learning and enhance the sense of community and belonging within the school family.

SIAMS report November 2016, St Chrysostom's CofE VC Primary, Chorlton on Medlock, Manchester M13 0DX