

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Stephen's Church of England Primary School	
Address	Uxbridge Road, Shepherd's Bush, London. W12 8LH
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	
Overall grade	Excellent
The impact of collective worship	Excellent
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Excellent

School's vision
<p>To deliver outstanding education in a caring community, with God at its centre. 'Turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding' (Proverbs 2:2).</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's deeply embedded Christian vision is driving distinctiveness and making a tangible difference to provision and practice. It has a transformative impact on the lives of pupils and adults. • Collective worship is a strong expression of the school's Christian vision. It is inclusive and invitational, and powerfully enhances the spiritual flourishing of all. • High quality religious education (RE) is well planned, and teaching and learning ensure that pupils have a high level of religious literacy. They speak fluently about their knowledge and ideas, but written work does not always adequately express their depth of thinking and verbal response. • Spirituality is a considerable strength at St Stephen's. The planned curriculum ensures that the developmental needs of all pupils are more than adequately nourished. • Pupils at St Stephen's are confident, articulate humanitarians who care deeply about their community and the wider world. They show this in the way they pray, raise funds and actively support good causes. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupil-led action in driving social change.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop pupils' written work in RE so that it more fully reflects pupils' exceptional understanding. • Continue to develop the personal advocacy of pupils so that they can courageously and effectively lead social action and change for themselves.

Inspection findings

St Stephen's is a vibrant and life-affirming Church school. Provision is inspired by its distinctive Christian vision and this leads to the flourishing of pupils and adults alike. Many parents rightly speak about its life-enhancing impact on the lives of their children. One explained 'we are part of something special here'. Another described the school being 'full of love'. An empowering 'why not?' culture, inspired by bold and creative leadership, leads to high quality and innovative provision. Many families justifiably feel extraordinarily grateful for this. The school is described by one member of the community as 'a deeply significant place where nobody is left behind'. A display asks 'who is God calling me to be?' This is effectively supported by the 'Cracking Careers' programme through which children learn about 'ordinary people like us who do extraordinary things'. This is an aspirational place of learning.

Governors know their school well. They provide wise counsel and challenge, whilst also upholding the school in prayer. They welcome the contribution and expertise of parents and other partners who support the school's strategic development. This is demonstrated in the school's work on diversity within the curriculum as well as a current focus on sustainability. They are ambitious for their school. Their priorities illustrate the inclusive culture of this school community where each pupil is highly valued. Staff are rightly proud of St Stephen's. They describe their high expectations for pupils, the way that leaders support their professional development and their concern for their wellbeing.

Partnerships with local churches are fundamental and described as 'knitting the community together'. The local vicar plays a key and highly valued role in the life of the school. Groups including the friends of St Stephen's (FOSS) and an alumni group 'Fossils' create opportunities for school and church communities to combine for the benefit of all. One parent explained 'everybody is invited, everybody is part'. Other collaborations such as that with the Shepherd's Bush Market, sporting organisations and other schools, lead to exciting experiences that meaningfully extend pupils' horizons. Life is lived in all its fullness in this school.

Pupils talk readily and articulately about their own personal development. They justifiably describe excellent relationships with each other and with adults. They are confident to ask for help and know that a counsellor is available to them if needed, as are many other trusted adults. When they disagree, they disagree well, and explain the importance of respecting each other's opinions. Relationships and health education lessons help them to live well together. One pupil rightly explained that these lessons ensure that children know how to 'forgive and move on' when this is needed.

Spirituality is an important aspect of each child's personal development. The pupil prayer group collect prayer requests from across the school each week. They pray with a member of staff and sometimes with the parent prayer group. On occasion the parent prayer group meets in the playground, so that others can feel able to join them. One pupil explained that after praying 'I feel like I have a connection with God and God has heard us'. Another said that meeting with the prayer group 'refreshes me and makes me feel I can carry on with the day'. The bespoke programme of 'spiritual identities' supported by carefully chosen Bible verses, provides a golden thread of spiritual development that weaves through the school. A Year 6 pupil explained that 'hope' was especially meaningful because 'we don't know what will happen when we leave St Stephen's'. Reflection tables in each classroom contain a carefully chosen range of special books and artefacts from different faiths. They are important to pupils because 'they show that everyone in our school is important, and we are all connected'.


Each day begins with collective worship and there is a palpable sense of joy as pupils and adults come together to learn, reflect and pray. Pupils play an integral part in worship. They lead prayer spontaneously and are involved in planning this compelling and inspiring expression of the school's Christian vision. Partnerships with the local churches and a sport organisation KICK, ensure children and adults enjoy a rich and varied range of worship experiences. These include traditional feast day celebrations, services in

church and an annual prayer day led by parents. Opportunities to worship with, learn from and enjoy life with people of faith, are intentionally created. Worship in this highly diverse school community is both inclusive and invitational. One pupil explained that ‘learning more about one religion helps you to understand more about your own’. The impact of this rich culture of personal spiritual development is considerable.

The well planned RE curriculum is enthusiastically led. The subject leader has attended training with the diocese, and in turn, leads staff development in school. Pupils say that RE is important because they need to learn about different religions ‘so that we can understand and respect each other’. Lessons skilfully combine theology with philosophical discussions and references to social science. Pupils are keen to contribute. They can explain complex core theological concepts and have strong religious literacy. Knowledge pages in exercise books outline key vocabulary and the sequential development of lessons. Alongside RE displays in each classroom, they enable children to track the progression of their learning. Work in books illustrates pupils’ knowledge. But it does not enable them to demonstrate their thinking in a way that matches the high level of remarkable verbal responses.

Pupils are caring and compassionate and the responsibility to help others is embedded through the Christian ethos of the school. House captains nominate charities, and visits such as one to the Ahoy Centre enable pupils to see how their fundraising impacts the lives of others. Pupils pray for situations around the world, and work with leaders to organise special events such as the Sunday lunch which raised money for refugees at the start of the conflict in Ukraine. However, the school has yet to develop a whole school approach that maximises pupils’ ability to lead social action and change for themselves, courageously and effectively.

St Stephen’s is an uplifting Church school, driven by love and inspired by its distinctive Christian vision. Lives are transformed and the community is enriched by its exceptional provision.

	The effectiveness of RE is	Excellent
	<p>As a result of the well planned and detailed curriculum, teachers teach well and pupils are fully engaged with RE. Visits to places of worship enrich pupils’ learning and equip them to speak articulately about their knowledge and experiences. They make strong progress and assessment data correctly evidences high attainment for all, including those who are disadvantaged. Pupils’ work is extensive and detailed but does not always reflect the depth of their individual responses and thinking.</p>	

Information			
School	St Stephen's CE Primary School	Inspection date	26 April 2023
URN	110353	VC/VA/Academy	VA
Diocese / District	London Diocese	Pupils on roll	443
MAT/Federation	n/a		
Headmaster	Michael Schumm		
Chair of Governors	Su Wijeratna		
Inspector	Nicola Flower	No.	C21/22