

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

| Saint Martin-in-the-Fields High School for Girls | |
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| 155 Tulse Hill, London, SW2 3UP | |
| Current SIAMS inspection grade | Outstanding |
| Diocese | Southwark |
| Previous SIAS inspection grade | Outstanding |
| Date of academy conversion | 1 April 2012 |
| Dates of inspection | 25 & 26 April 2018 |
| Dates of last inspection | 6 & 7 December 2012 |
| Type of school and unique reference number | Academy converter 137966 |
| Headteacher | Beverley Stanislaus |
| Inspector's name and number | Revd Craig Watson 78 |

School context

Saint Martin-in-the-Fields High School for Girls, founded in 1699, is a smaller than average sized single sex high school of 549 pupils including a co-educational Sixth Form. The school has a largely Black British population containing pupils of Caribbean and African heritage. The majority of pupils are from Christian backgrounds with a well above average proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium. A fifth of pupils have special educational needs and just under half do not have English as their first language. The school has been managing falling rolls.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Saint Martin-in-the-Fields High School for Girls as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Leaders are passionate about articulating, living out and promoting the 'with love and learning' vision rooted in the story of St Martin, and the distinctive Christian values of service, compassion, justice and perseverance.
- Students behave well as a direct result of the development and application of the school's Christian values of service, compassion, justice and perseverance.
- Students recognise the importance of religious education (RE) and the contribution it makes to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development through the school's focus on forming character 'with love and learning'.
- Standards in RE are above national expectations and progress in the subject is rapid, developing an understanding of Christianity and other religions, particularly Islam, reflecting the school's intake.

Areas to improve

- Develop the participation of learners in the planning, delivery and reviewing of collective worship, ensuring that they play a fuller roll in self-evaluation and improvement planning, so that collective worship is more engaging and inspiring.
- Embed the school's vision and values in the school curriculum so that it is promoted through all subjects.
- Build upon the latent knowledge of the school community to explicitly develop a greater awareness of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith.

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

The school's distinctively Christian values of service, compassion, justice and perseverance, drawn from the story of Saint Martin, are visible throughout the school public areas and corridors, as well as in most classrooms. This ensures that the whole school community are very aware of these values and students demonstrate them in their lives. Students of all faiths and none feel welcome and have a sense of value within the school community. One student who had special educational needs comments 'School is like home to me.' The significant improvements in behaviour and attendance, resulting from the introduction of the expectations prayer at the start of every lesson and the application of the school's values through the monthly themes, give a sense of confidence and pride to the school community. There are opportunities for students to explore spirituality through activities such as the prayer space initiative. Students develop confidence and the ability to communicate their thinking around the big questions of life as a result. Students value their RE, recognising its importance in understanding one another and the wider world. Whilst there is evidence of RE making a positive contribution to the school's Christian character through its vision and values development within RE lessons, this does not extend to most curriculum subjects. This creates the impression for students that they apply only to RE, the pastoral and the worship activities of the school. There is little evidence of the school's vision and values in the schemes of work and the delivery of other subjects. However the SMSC is evident across the curriculum leading to greater spiritual growth amongst students. The students and staff in the school community have many connections around the world that inform their prayers. Students and staff talk positively of respect for diversity and difference within the school community, confirming this by describing how they are free to grow spiritually in their own faith tradition. A parent states 'The Christian ethos has become more central to the working of the school.' This was confirmed by students who explained how that ethos has contributed to their SMSC development and improved their aspiration. The use of activities such as 'Worldly Wednesdays' or global prayer connections provide some opportunity for learners to consider Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith, however these are limited as they are largely experiences of staff and learners from outside of school or are unrelated to Christianity. There is some evidence of the school taking the initiative in promoting Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith through a development in the sixth form to link the school with a church project in Kenya, which is beginning to take shape. The centrality of prayer has a significant impact on the personal, health, social, citizenship and enterprise understanding of the students, leading to a transformation in students' aspirations. This, along with the introduction of the school's vision and values, impacts on the students' performance which is above the national average in many subjects and is improving. As one parent commented, as a result her daughter was 'studying like a trooper' despite the distractions and challenges encountered by teenagers outside of school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is delivered through tutor groups, year groups, sixth form and whole school assemblies as well as in special services in both Holy Trinity and St Martin-in-the-Fields churches ensuring that students experience a broad range of worship traditions. Students hold the newly appointed chaplain in high regard and through her guidance, and the appropriate themes she has set for collective worship, students confirm that they grow spiritually. Students engage in opportunities for service including charity appeals such as provision of Harvest offerings to Norwood and Brixton food bank and lunches for the elderly facilitated by Holy Trinity Church. Students experience a range of church traditions and local Anglican practice through services in partnership with the open evangelical Holy Trinity church and the liberal catholic Saint Martin-in-the-Fields Church. Acts of collective worship focus on the Bible and develop the use of liturgy, leading students to recognise and apply what they discover to their daily lives. Formal and informal prayer permeates the life of the school community through opportunities such as reading set prayers in collective worship or writing prayers for the prayer tree, leading to students drawing on prayer as a resource to support them in day to day life. Through the collective worship programme, students are implicitly made aware of the Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and they are able to explain this to some degree. Led by the chaplain, staff and visitors, including clergy, play a part in the planning and leading of the collective worship programme, enriching the experience of the school community. Participation in planning, leading, evaluating and improving collective worship by students is developing, leading to a greater responsiveness to students' spiritual needs. The faith committee, comprising of students from a number of religious backgrounds, exercise a limited role in the planning, delivery, self-evaluation and improvement of collective worship. Scripture is evident throughout the school, being used to give context to policies, vision and values and to reinforce collective worship themes such as the forgiveness theme highlighted by 'forgive as the Lord forgave you.' Students see collective worship as an important part of school life, regarding the development of the Chapel as a vital resource that enhances their ability to engage in meaningful worship. Parents confirm that the renewed focus on collective worship has a positive difference on the life of the school and upon their daughters' outlook on life, with noticeable change for the better.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The standards of learning in RE are effective leading to attainment that is consistently above national expectations. Current internal data for the Year 11 is in line with that of other core subjects suggesting that performance is on track above national expectations at this stage. The data for the Year 10 presents an even better picture when compared to national expectations. The Southwark Diocesan Syllabus is followed by the department which provides for a comparative study of religion at Key Stage 3 which is highly valued by students who learn exceptionally well. In lessons, students' progress is rapid with them demonstrating higher level skills leading to an excellent understanding of the impact of religion on believers. RE reinforces the school's vision and values which makes a good contribution to students understanding of the approach of 'With love and learning.' The majority of teaching is good with many lessons outstanding leading to students being inspired by the subject. The use of English as an additional language, special educational needs and disability and pastoral data is inconsistent creating fewer outstanding lessons than might otherwise be the case. The excellent leadership of the head of RE has embedded strategies for assessment ensuring consistent standards across the department in line with the school through the whole school system. These enable teachers to plan effectively and so move students forward rapidly in their learning. All students study full course RE through to GCSE, and A level RE is offered post 16, giving the subject a very high profile in the curriculum. All students in the sixth form have a core RE provision which ensures that learners continue to make their own personal reflections on questions of meaning and purpose. The choice of Islam as the second major religion to be studied in the GCSE course reflects an understanding of the needs of those students who are not of the Christian faith, the majority of whom are Muslim. This gives these students a sense of being valued and welcomed within the department and the school. The comparative studies at Key Stage 3 in such areas as founders, festivals, places of worship and creation, compare religions that are represented in the school leading to an enthusiastic engagement by students in their learning. The curriculum is rich and varied, providing opportunities for the study of a range of religions which allows students to make links between beliefs, values and practices and to compare these. The strong links with Holy Trinity and Saint Martin-in-the-Fields churches, along with other churches in the wider community, provide a context for the exploration of the variety of Christian and local Anglican traditions that are studied in RE. This helps to bring an impressive creativity and originality to the way students apply their RE knowledge and skills.

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

Leaders are making difficult decisions due to significant falling rolls by applying the school's vision and values strategically. The governance of the academy has an excellent understanding of the school's vision and values and their application to the daily life of the staff, parents and students enabling the senior leadership team and middle leaders to lead rapid positive change. Students, staff and parents acknowledge the positive impact of the explicit Christian values in meeting the needs of all students which is confirmed by improved aspiration, achievement and conduct. The leadership of worship is rooted with the head teacher and the chaplain whose weekly meetings lead to strongly developing good practice in this area. The establishment of a faculty structure for humanities including RE, with both a head of faculty and a head of RE leads to highly effective practice. The priority of both worship and RE is acknowledged by students leading to it being highly valued by them. The governors, head teacher and deputy heads confidently explain the vision and values which are lived out within the school community. This vision and values are distinctively Christian in their expression and have a notable positive impact on the quality of relationships within the school community. Students are very friendly and welcoming, seeking to serve visitors ensuring a harmony between the motto 'With love and learning' and the experience of the school community. Middle leaders are aware of the SMSC cross curricular themes that are embedded in the schemes of work and they are starting to build the vision and values into the delivery of their subjects more effectively. The effective self-evaluation system gives leaders a thorough understanding of the school's performance. This leads to detailed strategies for improvement that make a positive impact on the development of the school community. Excellent relationships with the Diocese of Southwark enrich the school community. Staff training, both of support staff and teaching staff, along with governor training, effectively develops their skills and abilities equipping them for their roles. Continuing good relationships with Lambeth local authority enhances governor training. A partnership with the University of Buckinghamshire provides opportunities for effective initial teacher training and staff recruitment, ensuring quality learning through a mix of experienced teachers and beginner teachers with fresh ideas. The sixth form works in partnership with the SL6 group of sixth forms to provide post 16 students with an enriched curriculum. The head teacher's capacity to lead, enable and serve is excellent. She strategically engages the school with the local church and the wider community, developing a sense of pride amongst parents, staff, former students and students, which raises aspiration in students. This is illustrated by the work of a former student from an estate who, whilst studying to be a doctor, is running an extra-curricular club to inspire learners to consider medicine as a career option.