

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Mary Redcliffe and Temple School

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| Somerset Square, Bristol, BSI 6RT | |
| Current SIAMS inspection grade | Outstanding |
| Diocese | Bristol |
| Previous SIAMS inspection grade | Outstanding |
| Local authority | Bristol |
| Date/s of inspection | 14 and 15 March 2017 |
| Date of last inspection | 1 March 2012 |
| Type of school and unique reference number | 109327 |
| Headteacher | Elisabeth Gilpin |
| Inspector's name and number | Jo Fageant 104 |

School context

St Mary Redcliffe and Temple School (SMRT) is a larger than average sized secondary school with a large sixth form. Students joining the sixth form from other schools now outnumber those who continue in the school from Key Stage 4. Whilst the majority of students are White British, the school has a higher than average, and increasing, proportion of students from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. Admission arrangements prioritise children from worshipping Christian families and reserve a number of places with no faith requirements for local children. The proportion of students with special educational needs or disabilities is in line with the national average. The school makes provision for a higher number of children in care than any other school in Bristol. The headteacher is a National Leader of Education and the school has Teaching School status.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Mary Redcliffe and Temple as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The clear Irenaeus inspired Christian vision, consistently promoted and lived out by all leaders, including governors, gives rise to strategies that have an outstandingly positive impact on the academic success and wellbeing of all students.
- The understanding that Christianity is not just about believing but about putting beliefs into practice has created a community noted for its social and charitable action that makes a difference locally, nationally and globally.
- The long established relationship with the Ikoba Church school in Uganda has enabled students to develop a good understanding of the multi-cultural nature of Christianity as well as how those who are materially better-off can learn from and be enriched by those in more disadvantaged circumstances.
- Christian worship is a central and influential aspect of the day to day life of the school and through this all members of the community develop a good understanding of Anglican and other Christian traditions.

Areas to improve

- Enable sharing of best practice in tutor group worship for years 7-11 so that more of the creative ideas that exist in the staff and student body get shared widely and keep practice fresh.
- Develop the new post 16 'global perspectives' course so it reflects the dual characteristics of being both deeply Christian and serving the common good found in the provision for and experience in the sixth form.

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

The views of many in the school community are summed up in the words of a senior student who described the school as 'a stimulating environment that couples academic excellence and support with personal nourishment.' This clearly reflects the values of the 'Alive' school ethos which arises from the words of Irenaeus: 'The Glory of God is a human being fully alive.' In efforts to achieve this for everyone, staff at all levels pay great attention to the learning and wellbeing needs of every student. Parents as well as students are keen to report that teachers notice things, they pick up on concerns and intervene to explore what and how support can best be provided. Teachers' tireless efforts, revision sessions, access to learning mentors and much more ensure that all students, especially the disadvantaged, achieve outstanding academic success. Pastoral care which includes support from the chaplain, a counsellor and a close bond with tutors, is of the highest standard. Mental health issues are well understood. Incidents of inappropriate behaviour are reducing because the school takes a great deal of care to investigate root causes and helps students find ways back from unwise choices. Fixed term exclusions and transfers to other schools are rarely necessary but always managed in ways that give students opportunities for a fresh start. Levels of attendance are high due to the all-round care the school provides and the enthusiasm for learning it develops. A broad curriculum, combined with a wide variety of extra-curricular activities, addresses students' academic, physical, aesthetic, spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) needs reflecting the aspiration that they should experience life to the full. Religious education (RE), the 'values in practice' course, collective worship and other aspects of school life inspire deep thinking and give rise to significant examples of social and charitable action. Many students attracted to join the sixth form from other schools do so because of its reputation as a place where social justice is lived out in ways that make a difference locally, nationally and globally. This is clear in the range of student initiated groups active within the sixth form such as the Christian Union, the feminist society and many more. An impressive example of action was a peace march organised through Bristol. The school's commitment to social awareness and personal responsibility is evident in the planned introduction of a 'global perspectives' course to be followed by many in the sixth form. It is also seen in the school's long-established link with a Church school in Uganda. Although SMRT has been able to provide financial support to improve resources in the materially poorer school, there is widespread recognition of how mutually enriching this relationship is. This, together with the diverse social, religious and ethnic mix within SMRT, means that everyone develops a good understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural worldwide faith as well as an understanding of and respect for wider examples of difference and diversity. Celebrating diversity is a particular focus of the school development plan (SDP) this year. Students of all ages value how the school accepts them for who they are, allowing them the freedom to be themselves in an ethos of mutual respect. Everyone says people are comfortable to discuss issues of personal faith within the school. This is clear in RE lessons where different views are shared in a safe and respectful context. Students thoroughly enjoy the challenge of wrestling with questions of meaning and purpose. They recognise that these opportunities prepare them for life in the wider world as well as nurturing their own spiritual and moral development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Reflecting the school's vision and values, themes explored in worship 'speak to everyone'. All can identify particular times of worship that have been especially meaningful or transformational for them. Using feedback from staff and students the chaplain produces high quality, inspiring resource materials. Everyone speaks of their great appreciation for how he makes themes relevant, topical and interesting. Students say, 'they make you think'. It is clear that this thinking supports SMSC development and leads to significant social and charitable action. This is seen, for example, in the ongoing partnership with Ikoba School, donating jumpers and hats to 'Caring at Christmas' and rising to the challenge of random acts of kindness during Lent. This demonstrates the school's understanding of worship: 'Worship means very little if it does not lead to the practical outworking of love in the school and the wider community.' Worship is central to the life of this school. The expectation that all students and teachers will attend and participate in all services and acts of worship is made clear. Whilst views about this vary, it is accepted positively as part of the day to day life and experience of SMRT. Worship is explicitly Christian and includes specifically Anglican services including the Eucharist held in house groups. Staff training days always include an act of worship and there are optional Eucharist services for them. Through these, and for many through their own church engagement, all members of the school community develop an excellent understanding of the seasons of the Church year; Christian festivals; the importance of Jesus, the Bible and prayer for Christians and the Trinitarian concept of God. Prayer is not only included in times set aside for collective worship. There are staff, student and parent groups all contributing to the rich prayer life of the school. Even those who do not actively participate appreciate the support and care of those who do. A wide variety of people including staff, the chaplain and visiting speakers from many different Christian traditions represented in Bristol enrich the worship life of the school. Many students confidently lead worship in the different groupings and locations in which it takes place. Everyone takes the lead in the context of tutor group worship. Tutors and the chaplain provide support if it is needed. Students particularly like and learn from worship led by their peers who share issues of importance to them. However, with this wide

delegation of responsibility there are variations in the quality of the worship experience. This is an ongoing challenge as new teachers and students join the school. A worship committee is in place to represent the views of the wider student body and the feedback gathered helps ongoing development and innovation.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The RE department at SMRT is acknowledged by students, colleagues and teachers in other schools to be a centre of excellence. It benefits from a team of highly skilled specialist teachers who use their expertise and creative approaches to support colleagues within SMRT and in other schools and contexts. The head of department has a good awareness and understanding of local and national developments in RE. This has enabled the department to anticipate the new curriculum suggestions for Key Stage 3 and the requirements of the new GCSE and A level courses. In addition, assessment arrangements have been revised. As a result, in the current period where national developments are uncertain, teaching and learning in this department continue to be well structured and meet learners' needs. Students speak of lessons being fun and how this helps them remember their learning. They enjoy opportunities to wrestle with and debate big questions, to express their own views and listen to those of others. They recognise that in some cases this transforms their thinking. They become reflective learners. Lessons help students develop a range of higher order thinking skills such as enquiry, interpretation and evaluation. Teachers use innovative ideas and varied activities to match tasks to the learning needs of different students. However, in some instances the most able students are required to complete the same work as others before going on to tasks more suited to their ability. Thorough marking helps students understand what they have done well and how to make improvements. The best practice requires them to respond to what teachers have written and make the improvements that have been suggested. As a result of this, and consistently good, and often outstanding, teaching, students make outstanding progress. The full GCSE course is followed by everyone in Key Stage 4 and the subject is popular at A level with students attaining results well above the national average. They demonstrate thorough knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other religions they study showing awareness of similarities and differences both within and between traditions. The high quality provision for RE and students' commitment to learning clearly demonstrate the 'Alive' vision and the Christian understanding of hope which runs through everything in the school.

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

Across the leadership team, including governors, there is a confident consistency in the promotion of the explicitly Christian vision for the school. They believe in being clear about what the school stands for because 'value neutral education does not exist.' Based on the findings of research, the 'Alive' vision is explained in practical terms. These are values and statements which set out what it means to be fully alive. Central to this aspiration is the guiding principle of hope demonstrated through safe boundaries, good relationships and empowered learning. These are known and used by everyone in the school community. The commitment to safe boundaries and good relationships is clear, for example, in the vertically arranged houses and tutor groups for Years 8-11. This mixed age arrangement is valued by everyone. The school's approach to empowered learning is evident, for example, in leaders' forensic interrogation and analysis of data that identifies issues which are likely to be those most significantly needing attention in each year group. This year, for example, these include attachment issues in Year 8. Staff work in cross-curricular learning communities each of which focuses on developing understanding of a key issue relating to one year group and finding ways to address it for the benefit of students' academic success and personal wellbeing. Evidence from senior staff monitoring indicates this coherent approach to school improvement is highly successful. Similar principles are applied to the professional development opportunities available to staff. Bespoke, nuanced induction and training courses and support are provided for staff at different stages of their career, who have different levels of responsibility and/or are facing particular challenges. This is a much appreciated, sophisticated and affirming approach to the professional development of staff at all levels. All these opportunities include consideration of how the 'alive' model applies in all contexts. Systems of pastoral care for staff are exemplary. They have access to coaching and counselling support if they need it. All these initiatives are lived out expressions of the vision, that every individual should be supported in being 'fully alive'.

Areas to develop set out in the last inspection have been fully addressed. Strong and influential even then, the school uses its teaching school status to enhance its outward facing influence beyond the school through the work of the headteacher and other key staff. They have contributed to the development of important documents about education from the national education office of the Church of England, to university courses, to local initiatives like the 'leading with moral purpose' course for potential and aspiring leaders. There are mutually beneficial links with churches and organisations in and around Bristol. Leaders, including governors, believe they have a duty to use their expertise and experience in the service of others, stated by one member of staff as, 'what you have been given is not just for you.' The school recognises how significantly it is itself enriched by involvements beyond the school.