

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

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| Buxted Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School | Hurstwood Road, Buxted, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 4BB. |
| Current SIAMS inspection grade | Outstanding |
| Diocese | Chichester |
| Previous SIAMS inspection grade: | Good |
| Local authority | East Sussex |
| Name of federation | South Ashdown Schools' Federation |
| Date of inspection | 10 October 2016 |
| Date of last inspection | 14 February 2011 |
| School's unique reference number | 114493 |
| Executive Headteacher | Anne Radford |
| Inspector's name and number | Kelly Dillon (886) |

School context

Buxted CE Primary School is a rural village school in East Sussex. Over the last ten years the school has doubled in size, now with 187 pupils on roll. Pupils are mostly from a White British heritage, principally coming from Buxted itself. Pupils come from a mix of socio-economic backgrounds with a lower than average number of them receiving pupil premium. Since January 2013 the school has worked in collaboration with another church primary school and in April 2015 the two schools became a confirmed federation. An executive headteacher has responsibility for the two schools in the federation and leads Buxted school with the head of school and the senior leadership team. In October 2016, after an eighteen month vacancy, a new rector was appointed to the parish.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Buxted as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The Christian ethos constantly drives forward school improvements, enabling all God's children to flourish and excel.
- A very strong Christian vision of leadership, based on Christian values and their biblical teaching, firmly underpins all aspects of school life.
- The high quality of collective worship engages and inspires pupils and uplifts other members of the school community, including staff, governors and parents.

Areas to improve

- Establish close ties with new rector, with a focus upon securing pupils' understanding of different Anglican traditions and Christianity as a world faith, promoting further respect for diverse communities.
- Enhance the distinctive Christian character by enriching external areas of the school to provide pupils with greater opportunities to nurture their own spiritual development.

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

The outstanding Christian character of the school is pivotal to the development of all its learners. The strong Christian ethos constantly drives forward school improvements, impacting on daily practice and ensuring the very best for all of God's children. Pupils, parents, staff and governors all talked about the distinctiveness of the school and how it positively influences their individuality and behaviour. One pupil stated that the school's Christian ethos had taught him to, 'think about what you do, think about what you say before you say it.' The Christian ethos ensures that all are cared for, nurtured and developed. Christian values are firmly embedded and permeate every aspect of school life. Pupils at the school develop a strong understanding of morality based upon these values. For example, the behaviour of all pupils is of the highest standard with respect towards all very evident throughout the school. Children are keen to come to school and are highly motivated and engaged by all that it offers. The core Christian value of respect is seen as of utmost importance by all stakeholders in ensuring that such a positive learning experience is enjoyed by all. Relationships between all members of the school community are especially good and are based upon mutual trust, support, understanding and respect. The whole school team works very closely together consequently ensuring the very best for the whole Christian family. Regardless of their ability or background, all pupils are valued. The distinctiveness of the school drives its holistic approach to effective learning. Parents reported how staff regularly go 'above and beyond' to ensure that each and every child reaches their full learning potential. High expectations and a commitment to developing the whole child are energised by Buxted's drive for excellence. Academic achievement is measured by progress and the school is quick to identify gaps in pupils' learning and deals with these gaps very effectively. One strong element of the school is its success in identifying and valuing each child's talents and interests which are then used as building blocks in securing academic attainment. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils is heavily determined by the distinctive Christian vision of the school. The whole curriculum provides regular opportunities for pupils to express their spirituality, emotions and responses to the world in a variety of ways: music, art and dance. However, the school recognises that in order to match the recent expansion to the building of the school, external opportunities for pupils' spiritual development should be extended. The school effectively promotes respect for diverse communities through the celebration of global communities and learning about Christianity as a world faith. Pupils have an excellent understanding of faiths from around the world and are particularly confident in sharing their knowledge. The teaching of religious education (RE) at Buxted enhances the Christian character of the school. Pupils explicitly make links between their own learning and how they relate this to their own lives and understanding of others. They are excited and passionate about RE and recognise the priority and status given to it by the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship has an overwhelming impact upon all members of the school community. It is inspiring and uplifting, positively influencing relationships across every aspect of the school. The themes and values explored in collective worship raise aspirations and set expectations for life within this church school setting. Biblical teaching sends a strong Christian message and pupils are especially confident in sharing how this theological knowledge informs their own choices. One pupil, whilst talking about moving onto secondary school, stated that the school's Christian values had prepared him for life. Prayer is deeply embedded throughout the school and children talk about the development of their own spirituality through the use of song, pause and reflection. Prayer areas in every classroom and around the school are firmly established and used daily by pupils and adults alike for their own personal prayer. Learners are confident in both planning and leading collective worship. Many pupils, even the very youngest, lead the whole school in prayer spontaneously. Collective worship takes place throughout the year in a range of settings. The rigorous monitoring and evaluation of collective worship by all stakeholders continuously drives forward improvements at Buxted. Views from across the whole school community lead directly into significant improvements in worship. Leaders of collective worship are extremely effective in developing the strong Christian focus. For example, in recent weeks, forgiveness has been explored using stories

from the Bible, examples of Christians forgiving others and considering how pupils can use forgiveness in their everyday life. All pupils are secure in their understanding of key Christian teaching, including the Holy Trinity. Themes from worship are followed up in the classroom and Key Stage setting, ensuring that each age group is confident in their knowledge of each theme. Since their last inspection the school has worked hard to develop pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-world faith. The new rector of the parish is very keen to use his recent experience and knowledge of working in the church abroad to help the school develop this further.

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

The exceptional leadership team at Buxted has developed an especially strong Christian vision that powerfully impacts upon all aspects of school life. This vision, linked to Christian values and their biblical foundations, is 'shared and lived' by all. Leadership at every level articulates this vision. For example; pupils, staff and parents all quoted the school aim of, 'Aspire and Inspire' as instrumental in motivating all members of the school community. They are inspired by the life of Jesus and aspire to live their own lives by following his example. The dynamic, ambitious leaders of the school are constantly driving forward improvements ensuring the very best for the whole Christian family of the school. 'Be the best that you can be,' instils in each child great self-esteem and confidence. School staff dedicate much time in developing the whole child, often working with families to remove any barriers to learning. This dedication to children is one way in which the Christian vision explicitly influences the actions of many. In this caring and nurturing Christian environment all are given the opportunity to excel and flourish. The school places a high priority in investing in a wide range of exciting opportunities for staff to develop their professionalism. As a forward looking school, Buxted is preparing for future leadership across church schools. Its federation with another church primary school has been highly successful, not only in strengthening and enhancing the leadership team, but also by widening opportunities to enrich life as a church school. Religious education and collective worship hold a central place in the curriculum and statutory requirements regarding their provision are met. Leadership of religious education is given a high priority and is currently effectively implementing the new 'Understanding Christianity' project across all age groups. The school has very close links with the village, surrounding community and the Diocese of Chichester. With the appointment of a new rector in the parish, it is expected that church and school links will be strengthened further. Strategic planning leads to whole school improvements with a systematic and robust self-evaluation programme. The school is never complacent, always seeking ways to be even better. This drive for excellence is fuelled by the vision shared by all, firmly rooted within the Christian teachings of the church.

SIAMS report October 2016 Buxted CE VC School Uckfield TN22 4BB.