

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Crawley Down Village Church of England Voluntary Controlled School	Hophurst Drive, Crawley Down, West Sussex, RH10 4XA
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Chichester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Good
Local authority	West Sussex
Date/s of inspection	5 October 2016
Date of last inspection	12 October 2010
School's unique reference number	131001
Headteacher	Oliver Burcombe
Inspector's name and number	Hilary Ferries 276

School context

The school serves the growing village of Crawley Down. It has recently expanded and further building work is planned. There are currently 352 children on roll. Most pupils are of white British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and those entitled to the pupil premium is below average. The school was judged to be good by Ofsted in September 2013. The headteacher was appointed in 2014.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Crawley Down Village CE School as a Church of England school are good

- The clear vision, based on explicit Christian values, influences all aspects of school life.
- The leadership team and governing body know their church school well, are ambitious for the future and have the capacity to improve the school further.
- Varied and engaging acts of worship capture the children's interest and contribute well to the positive relationships in school and with the local church.
- Relationships in the school are warm, supportive and caring and a significant element of the vibrant Christian ethos.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that religious education (RE) makes a greater contribution to an understanding of the Christian character of the school by embedding the impact of the recent developments.
- Explore the pupils' understanding of the place of personal prayer and reflection to encourage a deepening understanding of spirituality.
- Develop the outside environment to give further opportunities for spiritual development so that it contributes to the Christian character of the school.

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

The learning environment in Crawley Down Village School is distinctively Christian and gives opportunities for spiritual development and reflection. The school leadership has effectively addressed an issue identified from the previous inspection to 'make the Christian foundation of the school more explicit'. The 'high five' Christian values of respect, creativity, challenge, independence and teamwork are displayed in every classroom and articulated by pupils. One pupil said 'they help us improve not only in our work, but as a person too'. Living the values is celebrated each week in worship and pupils talk confidently of what the values mean to them and why they are important. The linking of the values to 'high five awards' makes them an integral part of school life. Biblical links to the values are explored, so pupils are aware of the distinctive Christian nature of the school. A recent development in every classroom is a 'wisdom and wonder' board where pupils can pose and answer a range of questions about their learning in religious education, or any question they have. The idea for the boards was initiated by the staff at a whole staff meeting and all are committed to it. Early feedback from the pupils suggests that they value this opportunity for deeper reflection. There are examples of reflection in many of the classrooms. Due to the building work there has been limited development of the grounds to encourage spirituality and reflection.

Christian values are reflected in the excellent relationships and behaviour in the school. Pupils engage positively with their learning and all groups achieve well as a result of the caring Christian ethos. Pupils say they feel valued and are quick to praise their teachers and other adults. The school is inclusive and welcoming to all, those who are Christian, those of other faiths and those of none. There are also many opportunities for moral, social and cultural development in the wide ranging topics in the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. The use of whole school topics enables the school community to discuss and reflect together and celebrate diversity, which leadership appreciate is important, particularly where pupils are predominately of White British heritage. Pupils talk about Christianity as a world faith and stress the importance of respect for all religions. Activities such as the shoebox appeal, which sends shoeboxes packed with items for families across the world, have captured the pupils' imagination and helped them to think of others. The school currently has a focus on religious education and this contributes well to the Christian character of the school. The units of work give pupils a range of opportunities to explore their own and others' beliefs and pupils felt confident to talk about their learning and their beliefs. This is relatively recent work and the school are keen to develop this to raise the status of the subject still further.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is an important part of the life of the school community. One pupil said 'It is an important time of the day to thank God'. Giving the younger pupils 'worship buddies' from the older classes has helped them to engage in worship right from the start of term and highlights the importance of worship as part of school life. Worship themes explicitly promote the school's Christian ethos as they are firmly rooted in Bible stories. Pupils have a good appreciation of the links between the school's values and the Bible. They explain how worship themes such as generosity help them in their lives. Pupils interviewed talked positively about the wide range of worship experiences that the school offers and the impact worship has. One pupil said 'I enjoy it because I care about Jesus and God and want to know more'. Feedback from children has enhanced provision for worship. The successful introduction of 'Open the Book', as a result of pupil feedback, has helped them understand a greater range of Bible stories. They talk enthusiastically about how the 'Bible comes alive' to them and understand the meaning of the messages. The contribution of the vicar and church team to this is creating stronger links with the church.

Pupils are keen to be involved in worship. The joyful harvest celebration, held at the church, showed the value of worship to the school community. Parents are very positive about the opportunities they have to be part of worship and keen to join the school for these occasions. The Christmas carol service, held outdoors, was well attended. Pupils are beginning to be more involved in the planning and delivery of worship. They contributed to

the Easter service and during the inspection a class were looking forward to leading worship later in the week. Pupil involvement is at an early stage and has been identified as an area for development.

The place of prayer in the life of the school is developing well. This has been verified through governors monitoring. Opportunities to pray and reflect during the school day and a whole school theme of prayer in RE, means that pupils are familiar with the Lord's Prayer. Older pupils have written a school prayer which is displayed in every classroom and used regularly. However, there is not yet a sense of personal prayer and how pupils might use that in their own lives. There have been some opportunities for pupils to explore the Trinity. They referred to a worship where it was discussed and the display in school that was created as a result. The school leadership are aware that they need to return to this to give further opportunities to develop pupils' knowledge.

The school has addressed the issue raised at the previous inspection regarding the monitoring and evaluation of worship. The RE subject leader, who is also responsible for worship and Christian distinctiveness, interviews pupils at the beginning and end of each half term to talk about their understanding of the theme and governors have interviewed pupils about their views of worship. This has provided strong evidence of the impact that worship has had on their understanding and identified ways that it can be further developed.

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

The headteacher has very strong ambition and vision for the school as a church school. He leads by example and is inspirational. He is well supported by his leadership team and staff and has led significant improvement of all aspects of the school as a church school. As a result, the school has improved since the last inspection. The development of the vision and the Christian values has had a significant impact on the achievement of pupils and the positive ethos that enables all to thrive. Particularly successful has been the involvement of all staff in the self-evaluation of the school as a church school which has meant they have been involved in the improvements and feel their suggestions are taken seriously. This has meant they have had input into the changes and development and are clear about where they are going. This self-evaluation has been used to inform the strategic plan, which incorporates the development of aspects of Christian character and enables the governors to track the progress of initiatives. The headteacher has also appointed a member of staff to lead the development of RE, Christian distinctiveness and collective worship and her successful work has meant that these areas have remained high on the school's priorities. The comprehensive use of the diocese training opportunities has supported her well and is building future leadership for church schools.

Governors' involvement in development days has enabled them to contribute to the school's vision and values. They are further involved through monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the initiatives to strengthen the Christian ethos. Because this has included listening to the views of children, governors know the school well. Good quality reports from this monitoring are used to accurately identify further areas for improvement. This is making a good contribution to the continual development of the school's Christian ethos. This is still at an early stage and has yet to be fully embedded. Governors, children staff and parents talk about the positive Christian ethos and the high level of care in the school. There are good links with the church congregation and the local community. In addition to 'Open the Book', the church community offer 'Messy Church', a lunchtime Bible club and other successful joint events. Noticeboards in school and church enable the two communities to share their events. Parents volunteer with a range of activities, including clubs, to support the school. New parents are made aware of the Christian nature of the school and how they can be involved and the school is growing in numbers. The school meets statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.