

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Duncton Church of England Junior School	
Willett Close, Duncton, Petworth, West Sussex. GU28 0LA	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Chichester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	West Sussex
Name of federation	Lavington Park Federation
Date/s of inspection	19 January 2017
Date of last inspection	28 June 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled. 125980
Headteacher	Helen Martin
Inspector's name and number	Kelly Dillon 886

School context

Duncton Church of England Primary School is a rural village school in West Sussex. The school is smaller than average, with 61 pupils on roll, aged from 7 – 11. Duncton forms part of the Lavington Park Federation with Graffham CE Infant School. It is also a Forest School. The Headteacher, Deputy Head, SENDCO, Business Manager and Governing Body all work across both schools. Pupils are mostly from a White British heritage. Pupil premium is below that of the national average and the number of pupils with special educational needs is slightly above. Over the last academic year the school has seen some changes in staffing. Two new teachers joined the school in September 2016, the deputy headteacher at Graffham has recently been appointed in the role across the Federation and a new RE lead has been in post since November 2016.

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

- A very strong Christian vision of leadership, based on Christian values and their biblical teaching, firmly underpins all aspects of school life.
- The distinct Christian setting where all God's children are valued and pupil voice shapes school improvement.
- The wide range of high quality opportunities and experiences that encourage the Spiritual development of all pupils.

Areas to improve

- Embed the five new Christian values, making them more explicit and giving all members of the school community the language to articulate the impact that these values make on their own lives.
- To build upon the impact of pupil conferencing, to involve all stakeholders in evaluating all aspects of life in a Church school.

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

At Duncton all God's children are known and truly valued. The Christian character of the school directly impacts upon academic achievement and personal well-being through the thorough investigation and support for every child's individual needs and emotions. The Christian distinctiveness of the school drives its holistic approach to effective learning. A commitment to developing the whole child is energised by Duncton's drive for excellence. The staff, parents and pupils all work together to ensure that every child reaches their full potential. The caring Christian community extends to parents as they feel very supported by the school and they in turn support one another through daily life.

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 achievement. For instance, one child's ability to write has been fostered through his love of tractors. Child led learning is quite typical across the school and is seen as instrumental in securing positive mindsets for learning. Academic achievement is measured by progress and the school is quick to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and deals with these gaps very effectively. As one parent commented, 'Whatever level you are, it is catered for.' At the school, all achievements are celebrated. Many stakeholders talked about the confidence that is instilled in pupils during their time at the school. Children are given the confidence to follow their own interests and the courage to go forward with their learning. Teamwork is especially strong and this 'togetherness' as God's family ensures that the learning needs of all are met.

Christian values have recently been reviewed and are lived out in the daily life of the school. They are instrumental in creating a calm and secure working environment, but not everyone can articulate the impact of these on their lives. The core Christian value of respect is seen as of utmost importance by all stakeholders in creating a safe haven where all opinions are valued. Through Forest School the Christian values are reinforced through learning a deep respect for the natural world and the local environment. Pupils at the school develop a strong understanding of morality based upon these values. The behaviour of pupils is of the highest standards. Children are very keen to come to school and are highly motivated and engaged by all that it offers. Relationships between all members of the school community are especially good and are based upon the key Christian values of trust and respect.

A key strength at Duncton is the range of experiences on offer that encourage the Spiritual development of every child. Regular opportunities for reflection are built into school life, right across the curriculum. Pupils have time to pause and to consider the wonder of our world. Meditative techniques such as Zentangle, Yoga and Mandala have been brought to the school through its link school in India and have been especially successful in helping pupils to develop their own sense of Spirituality. Time in the forest also allows children to admire 'the glory of where we are.' Children talked about the 'silent spot' during Forest school and how during that time they were able to respond to God's world in their own chosen way.

Learners are fully aware that Christianity is a multi-cultural world faith. Children have researched and celebrated Christmas around the world, in fact basing the whole of their Christmas performance upon such research. The school is very conscious of its rural, idyllic setting and endeavours to give pupils as many opportunities as possible to learn about diverse communities. Pupils have an excellent understanding of faiths from around the world and are particularly confident in sharing this knowledge. The teaching of religious education (RE) at Duncton enhances the Christian character of the school. Pupils are excited and passionate about RE and readily recognise the importance of the subject in their own lives.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

High quality collective worship engages and enthuses all members of the school community. It is fun, inspiring and uplifting, positively influencing relationships across every aspect of school life. Acts of worship clearly reflect the school's vision of 'discover together.' As one member of staff stated, 'Worship provides a forum for discussion and reflection ... where pupils freely discuss their ideas and listen to others.' This forum is emphasised by the way in which the school community sit during worship – in a circle around the altar. This not only ensures that each and every individual will be listened to and respected, but that Christ is central to life at Duncton.

The themes and values explored in collective worship raise aspirations for life within this Church school setting. Biblical teaching sends a strong Christian message and pupils are becoming more confident in sharing how this theological knowledge informs their own life choices. Learners are also offered opportunities to explore the Holy Trinity and leaders of worship are particularly skilled at exploring this at an age appropriate level.

Prayer is embedded in school life. Pupils recognise the importance of prayer and can talk about the purpose of prayer and reflection. Reflection areas in every classroom and around the school are firmly established and used daily by pupils and adults alike for their own personal prayer and reflection. One child stated that prayer was important, 'to talk to God, so that he can help you with things that you are struggling with and then you can be grateful.'

A rich experience of worship is offered at Duncton with a range of leaders delivering acts of worship across the school year and in a range of settings. Pupils are very confident in planning and leading worship both in school and in the local churches, shown by a group of pupils explored the theme of global warming whilst considering the Christian values of respect and responsibility.

Since the last inspection the school has taken steps to improve the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship. Pupil voice is gathered through regular conferencing and staff and governors are also involved in giving feedback. This regular monitoring is always considered and leads to future improvements, such as providing pupils with more regular opportunities in planning and leading worship.

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

The inspirational Headteacher, in conjunction with the governing body and other senior leaders, has developed a strong Christian vision that impacts upon all areas of school life. 'Discover, imagine and learn together,' underpinned by the Christian values and their biblical foundations, positively energises the work of all stakeholders. At every level of this Christian community all members live this vision. This positive and honest working environment creates a culture of love, support and care. Pupils are warmly encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, to take risks and to learn from their mistakes. As a result pupils grow in confidence and are spiritually aware. Using the guidance that emulates from this Christian culture and ethos pupils develop a lifelong love of learning. Duncton is a family orientated school supporting whole families as well as individual pupils. Christian care and wellbeing is shown to all, especially by the headteacher who spends a lot of time talking to and working with each child and their family. The time and dedication that she spends in developing 'the whole child' is one way in which she acts out her Christian vision for the school.

In this caring Christian environment all are given the opportunity to excel and flourish. The exceptional leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher directly impacts upon the professional development of each of her staff. All members of the school team feel very well supported and nurtured. They strongly spoke about the ability of school leaders in recognising the strengths of staff and building positively upon these. As a forward looking school, Duncton is preparing for future leadership across Church schools. Its federation with Graffham 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 needs are met.

The vision of the school is secured through careful evaluation and strategic planning. 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 placing the interest of every child at the heart of any plan. At Duncton all are seen as leaders. Pupil voice is especially strong and children know that they are making a difference, for example pupils were instrumental in drawing up the new behaviour policy. The success of such conferencing is now going to be built upon, ensuring that the opinions and view of all stakeholders are gathered and acted upon, in order to aid the school to continue moving forward.

There are very strong partnerships between the school, parents, governors and the wider community.

The school is central to village life and positively continues its Christian mission within the local area. Pupils have a strong sense of responsibility within the community and are regularly involved in local events. It is a mutual partnership with both the school and the villages benefitting. School services such as Remembrance and Christingle, are very well supported by parents and members of the wider school community. The partnership between the two churches and the school are especially strong. As one governor described links are, 'very well established ... with pupils seeing the Church as an extension of their school.'