

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Ferring Church of England Primary School

Sea Lane Ferring Worthing West Sussex BN12 5DU

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Chichester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	West Sussex
Date of inspection	11 th July 2017
Date of last inspection	10 th January 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 125982
Headteacher	Gill Silk
Inspector's name and number	Jacqueline Cobb
Quality assurance	Lyn Field 151

School context

Ferring CE primary school is an averaged- sized primary with 204 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are White British. The numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above average. The headteacher has been in post 12 ½ years. During the last 4 years there have been significant changes to the teaching staff. The school is linked with St Andrews church and the local Baptist Church.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ferring as a Church of England school are good

- Senior leaders and governors articulate a shared Christian vision, where stakeholders, especially the pupils, can make connections to the daily life of the school.
- The strong and supportive partnership with the parish church and the Baptist church contributes fully to the life of the school and richly benefits the learners.
- The Christian character of the school is underpinned by Christian values, which results in the school community feeling that they are part of a family. Pupils' behaviour both in classrooms and around the school is positive and respectful.
- High quality pastoral care and support for the pupils nurture the development of the whole child and reflect its Christian character.
- The varied worship programme contributes effectively to the school's good provision of spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development opportunities and pupils respond positively.

Areas to improve

- Deepen pupils' understanding of Anglican beliefs and traditions, in particular how God is understood as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Provide a wider range of learning experiences to improve pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith.
- Strategically plan further development of staff, senior leaders and governors as leaders of a church school to extend their skills and keep them abreast of national developments.

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

Ferring CE Primary school is a nurturing and welcoming community with a strong 'family feel'. This is a clear expression of the Christian underpinning and reflected through its vision and values as a 'Place to grow'. Pupils from across the school can now clearly articulate the school's 18 Christian values and link them to Bible stories. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection and is the direct result of monitoring by senior leaders and governors. This showed that the three year cycle meant that pupils did not encounter some values often enough for them to become integral to their thinking. The senior leaders have worked hard to ensure the 18 values are now embedded through the connections they make with collective worship and RE and are taught across one academic year. One member of staff said, 'The Christian ethos is clearly visible through the staff and children.' The Christian values are clearly shown in the strong and supportive relationships within the school and in the resulting good behaviour.

Pupils talk about wide ranging values which influence their behaviour and relationships within the school and wider community. The nurturing environment enables staff to find the best in every pupil. Parents comment on the care and 'family feel' of the school. Worship and RE make positive contributions to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. Pupils have the opportunity to learn about a range of faiths. It helps pupils recognise and respect difference and diversity and one upper key stage pupil said, 'You can't judge people from their religion.' However, although there is some understanding of other faiths and that 'everyone has the freedom to believe', there is limited awareness of Christianity and its traditions in other parts of the world. Older pupils thrive on responsibility and talk proudly about being a peer mediator or playtime leader. Pupil voice is a strength of the school and when the new vision behind, 'A place to grow' was finalised, pupils' response was to depict the meaning of the vision through photographic posters designed by the children to show the vision in action around the school in daily life.

RE has a high priority within the school curriculum and a typical comment from pupils was, 'RE isn't just a lesson it's about who we are and what we do.' This is as a result of leaders ensuring that the development of the school's Christian vision and values are at the heart of all that they do. RE supports the school's Christian foundation well. The structure of RE teaching stimulates an enquiry based approach and embraces the study of a number of different faiths and this develops pupils' understanding and respect for other cultures. In keeping with the school's vision, there is a clear focus on raising academic achievement and ensuring good progress. Attainment in Key Stage 1 has significantly improved on 2016 results. Reading in Key Stage 2 is improving rapidly although this has not been replicated across all subjects. Leaders are proactive in seeking proven best practice to further raise attainment across the school. Attendance is around the national average and there are very few occasions when poor behaviour gets in the way of learning. The school works fairly and compassionately to resolve issues, parents look to the school to repair relationships if friendships are struggling. Consequently, pastoral systems within the school are strong. Staff, parents and children feel cared for. The website and newsletters show that there is a good range of extra-curricular activities which promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development well. Pupils are enthusiastic about opportunities for charitable work and it is seen as a further expression of the school's Christian ethos.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The growth of the worship planning group has resulted in school leaders, clergy and governors developing a coherent and progressive approach to collective worship. It strongly promotes the school's Christian values and ensures a close eye is kept on the quality of worship that pupils experience. Older pupils can articulate the difference between prayer and reflection, 'Reflection is about reflecting on God and God's impact in your life, prayer is about a way to communicate.' It was evident that there has been development of prayer across the school as pupils are now confident when they are invited to spontaneously lead prayers during collective worship. Pupils spoke about the recent tragedies that occurred across the country and how in school they held a minute's silence and were invited to pray for all those affected by the events.

Bible stories are taught in collective worship and relate to pupils' lives today. Pupils are proud about receiving their personal Bibles at the start of Key Stage 2, a few said that they chose to re-visit some of the stories focussed on in worship, during morning reading time. Pupils, therefore, have a good understanding of the place of Jesus in worship. The clergy are regularly in school supporting staff in developing worship in classes. As a result, it builds on and strengthens the theme introduced from whole school worship and pupils raise deep issues for discussion. However, whilst older pupils are aware of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit they are not yet able to talk about this or different Christian traditions with understanding. Within each classroom a reflection table has been set up, pupils talk confidently about how they use it to pray. The school has ensured that senior leaders, staff and clergy regularly lead worship and in a range of settings.

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

The leadership team and the governing body consistently and clearly describe the vision for the school to learn within a Christian community, 'a place to grow.' Leaders know their school well and have developed clear action plans to improve standards, following their recent Ofsted inspection in December 2016. The headteacher and the RE leader have been absent through illness for a significant amount of the academic year. However, the deputy, in the role of acting headteacher, has continued to promote the shared vision of leaders. This has kept the school focused on improvement and maintained the school's momentum as a church school. Leaders have embraced opportunities for support in moving the school forward and visits to locality and deanery schools, recognised for their good practice, have been used to introduce elements to benefit learners. Leaders comment, 'If behaviour issues arise, it is the language of being a Christian school that allow conversations to happen.' However, in recent times there have not been opportunities for staff to undertake training in developing their skills as leaders of church schools. More generally, the school has not recently accessed up to date training in national and diocesan initiatives to support strategic development.

Governors have introduced a systematic programme of monitoring and evaluation and this has played an important role in improving the impact the school has had as a church school. They make regular visits to the school as part of a planned programme which monitors the impact of the changes they have made. As a result, RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements. Governors are confident that leadership is about the implicit and the explicit impact of Christian values and that staff model them on a daily basis.. On the day of the inspection a group of governors were having conferences with pupils. The Christian value of courage was discussed and a pupil said, 'It's about being out of your comfort zone.' This showed the positive impact of changes made to the way pupils learn about values.

The deep and meaningful partnership with the local churches and the community serve to enrich the school's Christian foundation. Typical comments from parents were: 'The relationship with the churches allows children to feel part of something bigger.' 'When children are out and about the village, as a mini community, they have a real sense of identity.' The school and church, therefore, work together and present as a cohesive unit.

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