



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Hurst Green Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

London Road
Hurst Green
Etchingham
East Sussex
TN19 7PN

Previous SIAMS grade: Satisfactory

Current inspection grade: Satisfactory

Diocese: Chichester

Local authority: East Sussex

Dates of inspection: 8 March 2016

Date of last inspection: 25 and 26 May 2010

School's unique reference number: 114508

Headteacher: Kate Harper (Acting Executive Headteacher)

Inspector's name and number: Connie Hughes 765

School context

Hurst Green CE Primary is a small rural school. There are 107 pupils on roll, divided into five classes. Pupils are mainly white British from the surrounding area. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is above the national average. There have been significant headteacher, governance, clergy and staff changes since the last inspection. The local authority and diocese have ensured temporary interim senior leadership is in place for this academic year. There are currently no Anglican clergy attached to the school. There is an independent nursery school on-site catering for children from two years of age.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Hurst Green as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- The committed leadership of the acting head of school, supported by the acting executive headteacher, is developing the school's Christian distinctiveness.
- Adults and pupils relate well to each other in an atmosphere of mutual respect, support and friendship.
- Religious education experiences contribute to pupils' understanding of the Bible, Christianity and other world faith beliefs and practices.
- Distinctly Christian teaching in collective worship contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Areas to improve

- Make explicit the link between the school's chosen values with the gospel of Christ to build upon the ethos of their church school distinctiveness.
- Raise the quality of religious education teaching by providing activities pitched at the right levels to challenge pupils of all abilities.
- Provide structured learning experiences for pupils to plan, engage and deliver a greater richness to the prayer life of the school.
- Improve the effectiveness of the governing body and senior leadership monitoring by establishing rigorous evaluation strategies to secure evidence of the impact of Hurst Green as a church school on the academic achievement, personal development and well-being of all pupils.

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

Following a difficult and sustained period of multiple leadership changes the school is now developing strategies to embed its church school distinctiveness. Current interim senior managers have quickly and accurately identified the school's main strengths and weaknesses and are determined to bring about improvement in its church school ethos. The school motto 'Living, Loving and Learning with God' and mission statement are underpinned by a range of recently reviewed Christian values agreed by the whole school community. The five agreed core values, of trust, friendship, forgiveness, wisdom and compassion, at present lack an explicit understanding and demonstration of their Biblical importance to the community as a whole. Discussion with some parents and carers identified the need for a more explicit celebration of the school's distinctly Christian values, as they found it difficult to relate their children's experiences and success to the school's faith foundation. Adults and pupils relate extremely well to each other in an atmosphere of mutual respect, support and friendship. Parents overwhelmingly state 'our children are happy and safe in a nurturing and caring community. Pupils unanimously agree, 'there is always someone somewhere to help you'. Current national and school data indicates that attainment and pupil progress is good across the school. The school environment reflects its Christian foundation through Anglican symbols, spiritual garden and recently collated vibrant displays of pupils' work on developing its core values. Although classroom worship areas with newly purchased artifacts identify the school's faith foundation they as yet do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to interact and reflect on their beliefs. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) is a strength of the school. Religious education (RE) provision, enjoyed by the pupils, contributes to their understanding of the Bible, Christianity and other world faith beliefs and practices. RE linked to Learning Journey themes and supported by the external provider 'Bible Explorers' further enhances pupils' knowledge. Monitoring of RE by the leadership team to raise standards and secure a greater challenge in all pupils' learning is not yet established. A range of charitable events raise pupil's awareness and response to local, national and global issues, e.g. Eco warriors, Children in Need and MacMillan nurses.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

The recently updated collective worship policy reflects the traditions and beliefs of the Church of England (CE). The planning of content and structure for worship is being revised and developed for a more consistent approach to school practice, including promoting pupils' understanding and identification of the school's core Christian values. Weekly acts of worship incorporating Biblical stories, hymns and prayers to reflect chosen themes enable pupils to enjoy and engage in worship. Significant events and festivals in the CE calendar are celebrated through worship services primarily held in the school with, for example, Year 3 and 4 pupils preparing a presentation of the Easter Story. Year 6 pupils plan and lead Friday afternoon sharing assemblies, including recognising, celebrating and rewarding pupils who demonstrate good social and moral values. Class led worship, reflecting their curriculum themes, takes place on a weekly cycle. Through worship pupils are familiar with Anglican symbols, Christian greetings and responses. Pupils understand the lighting of the candle on the altar is 'opening a channel to God to hear their prayers', an important aspect of collective worship. The Lord's Prayer and use of the class prayer books, collated at the beginning of the school year, are central to their whole school spiritual worship experiences. A prayer board with prayer boxes have been introduced and prayers are now said at lunchtime.

Worship is not good overall because evidence of planning and evaluation is extremely limited. Although evaluations of worship involving governors, staff and pupils have been introduced they are not sufficiently embedded to identify its purpose and spiritual impact on the school community. Pupils do not, as yet, explore and experience prayer and worship from a variety of Christian traditions in order to reflect, enrich and discover God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Links with the local church to support the school's Anglican faith foundation are currently limited due to a clergy vacancy in the parish.

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

The overall leadership and management as a church school are only judged as satisfactory due to significant periods of change in senior leadership and professional difficulties since the last inspection. Senior leaders lack high quality evidence on the effect that the Christian ethos has on the learner. Implementing a rigorous strategic plan of action to contribute explicitly to the school's effectiveness as a Church of England school on all learners' achievements and well-being has not yet been established. The Governing Body of Hurst Green is aware of what needs to be done to improve the situation and is focused upon providing active and substantive Christian leadership to embed its church school ethos. Good collaboration between the newly appointed Acting Executive Headteacher, the Acting Head of School and effective engagement with the diocese has identified the school's strengths and the areas required for improvement. Plans are in place to cascade planned professional development in church school leadership and the delivery of effective collective worship to enhance whole staff knowledge and succession planning.

Parents are fully supportive and thankful of the whole school staff team who model 'kindness and caring' in an inclusive family environment. The Acting Head of school, previously the senior teacher, is seen as 'the glue, holding the school together' ... 'we don't know where we would be without her.' Although parents and the wider community are fully appreciative of the school they are not yet fully involved in understanding and celebrating the school's explicit Christian distinctiveness. The Hurst Green School Association (HGSA) are active in providing school resources and supporting community events, including the Village fete.

The requirements for collective worship and religious education are met.

SIAMS report March 2016 Hurst Green CE Primary School TN19 7PN