

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Lavant Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	
West Stoke Road, Lavant, Chichester, West Sussex. PO18 0BW	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Chichester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	West Sussex
Date of inspection	25 May 2017
Date of last inspection	22 November 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 125986
Headteacher	Adrian King
Inspector's name and number	Richard Dyer 513

School context

Lavant CE Primary School is a small rural four class primary school with 104 pupils from Lavant and surrounding areas. Children are predominantly White British with English their first language. The percentage of children on the Special Needs register and those eligible for Pupil Premium funding are both below the national average. The headteacher is in his sixth year at the school. The school is located in a modern building with stimulating grounds that include 'reflective' areas. There are close links with the local church, Chichester, and schools in Kenya and Japan. The school holds many awards including a UNICEF Rights Respecting School award.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Lavant CE Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- The school has a very strong and distinctive Christian character based on a clear Christian vision securely embedded in all aspects of the school which impacts very positively on the school's provision and outcomes for the pupils.
- Collective worship plays a highly significant and central role in the life of the school in promoting the school's Christian values and ethos.
- The strong Christian vision and leadership of the headteacher solidly underpins the school's Christian distinctiveness.

Areas to improve

- Develop pupils' understanding of cultural diversity in the national context by establishing links with a culturally diverse school community within the UK.
- Develop opportunities for spirituality during worship by making greater use of the school grounds for acts of worship.
- Develop church school leadership opportunities through the implementation of the 'Understanding Christianity' materials.

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

Lavant CE Primary School has a very strong Christian character and ethos based on an explicit Christian vision and five core values underpinned by biblical examples centred on the stories and teachings of Jesus. The vision and values are shared by all members of the school community who confidently articulate them and their significant impact on the daily life of the school. Pupils clearly talk about the link between the school's Christian characteristics and biblical teaching and how, for example, the teachings of Jesus and the Lord's Prayer are the basis of why they say sorry, forgive and start afresh after any wrongdoing. The Christian characteristics and values of the school are clearly expressed visually in displays around the school and are deeply embedded in school life. They strongly underpin the creative curriculum provision and the high quality of care and relationships between members of the school community. The impact of this is seen in the achievements of the children and how the school successfully meets their individual needs.

Adult members of the school community clearly model the school's values in their interaction with the pupils and each other and pupils display exemplary behaviour, care and respect for each other. Parents talk passionately about the school being a warm, welcoming, friendly, happy place where their children are loved, nurtured, cared for and respected. One parent described the school as "oozing love" and giving her a special feeling "Akin to walking into a church". Parents talk positively about the impact of the school values on their children's well-being and achievements in school and how they impact positively at home. One parent described how improved respect and relationships between family members was directly due to the influence of the school's values on the family.

The curriculum is based on creative and imaginative learning experiences which extensively use the environment, visits, visitors and enrichment activities, providing regular opportunities for children to engage in high quality experiences that develop their personal spirituality. Older children describe the peace they feel within the tranquillity of the reflective area and its sensory wind and water features, and awe and wonder can be seen on the faces of younger children witnessing butterflies hatching in school.

The school's strong Christian character and values significantly impact on spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. This is promoted through the creative curriculum with its frequent out of school visits such as weekly visits to the local Forest School, and through religious education (RE) and collective worship. It is further developed through pupil responsibilities such as School Council and support for local, national and international charities, a wide variety of extra-curricular activities including a Worship Club, strong partnerships with the local church, community, and networks with neighbouring schools. The school has strong and effective links with schools in Kenya and Japan which also promote SMSC development and contribute to the pupils' high degree of understanding and respect for diversity. Links with a culturally diverse school community within the UK to provide opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of cultural diversity in the national context are not yet established.

RE contributes significantly to the school's Christian character, SMSC development, and pupils understanding and respect for diverse faiths and cultures. The school has adopted the new 'Understanding Christianity' RE materials which has impacted strongly on the development of RE resulting in learners being excited and challenged by RE.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is a central and important part of school life. It strongly promotes the school's Christian values and ethos, and has a significant impact on pupils' outstanding relationships and behaviour, and the daily life of the school community. Worship is carefully planned by the Foundation Committee based on the Christian faith and regularly includes biblical material which children relate to the school's values and their lives. A wide range of people lead worship including children, staff, clergy, foundation governor and visitors. Key Anglican festivals are celebrated, sometimes in the local church and are well supported by the parents who also attend the regular class led worship in school and appreciate the opportunities to do so.

Worship is conducted in a dignified and respectful way creating an appropriate atmosphere. Christian symbolism is present along with the key elements of Christian worship which are presented in such a way as to promote children's engagement with the worship and help develop spirituality. For example, children blowing and catching soap bubbles linked to them reading and acting a Bible story. As a result children are eager to participate, talk positively about worship and understand and articulate the central position of Jesus in the Christian faith. For example, that Jesus is the light of the world. Children also articulate an age-appropriate understanding of the Trinity which is imaginatively explained in worship and RE.

Prayer is an integral part of worship which extends to other times of the school day such as lunchtime, and to reflective areas in the hall, classrooms and multi-sensory reflective areas in the school grounds. Opportunities are provided for pupils to write prayers and post them on the 'Prayer Tree' in the hall for inclusion in the worship. They have also recently experienced prayer in a designated Prayer Room temporarily created by the children's Worship Club which they plan to repeat in the future. Pupils appreciate the opportunities for prayer both in school and at home and talk about the value of prayer for "staying in contact with God". Parents report how the prayer 'habit' carries forward to home with pupils saying prayers at bedtime and special prayers for friends and relatives.

There are embedded systems for the monitoring and evaluation of worship. The 'Worship Committee' is a significant development since the previous inspection made up of the pupils' Worship Club, staff and governors. Their evaluations and feedback have led to significant developments in the worship and the promotion of the values and lessons taught in worship during the daily life of the school. These include greater pupil participation in the planning and delivery of worship, the creation of the Prayer Room and the award of certificates to children who significantly display the school's values. Whole school Eucharist and extending worship into the rich multi-sensory environments within the school grounds are also developments identified but not yet implemented.

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

The headteacher has a clear Christian vision for the school rooted in Christian values that are shared by the whole school community. The vision and values are central to the life of the school and underpin its creative curriculum, and high quality pastoral provision. Staff and governors strongly support the vision and values and readily articulate its significant impact on the daily life of the school and pupils' academic and personal development. The impact is seen in the pupils' positive achievements and well-being, exemplary behaviour and relationships, and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

School self-evaluation has significantly developed since the previous inspection. Regular and effective systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the school's vision, values and effectiveness are in place and involve all stakeholders through questionnaires, the governors' Foundation Committee and pupils' Worship Club and School Council. Consequently, school leaders have a thorough understanding of the school's performance, its distinctiveness as a church school and the school's strengths and areas to develop further. This leads directly into effective plans and strategies for improvement that focus on meeting the needs of learners and improving the effectiveness of the school as a church school. For example, imaginative and creative ways to develop writing and RE, stronger pupil voice opportunities, and wider links with other schools. Governors clearly know the school well and both challenge and support the headteacher.

There is a strong culture of the school community wanting to improve their effectiveness and they take full advantage of opportunities for staff and governor development offered internally and externally, including opportunities offered by local school networks and diocesan opportunities. Consequently governors are highly effective in their role and significantly involved in the life of the school. Internal development opportunities currently include the whole school development of using the new 'Understanding Christianity' RE material led by the RE leader. Developing the current leadership of worship and RE are given high priority and there are clear development plans for worship and RE. Opportunities for other staff to develop leadership roles in a church school are less well identified as part of continuing professional development.

There are strong links with parents, the local church and community, the wider community of Chichester and its cathedral, local school networks, and the international community through links with schools in Kenya and Japan. These all contribute fully to school life, promote the school's values and give clear benefits to the children. For example, year six children from the school networks working collaboratively at venues such as Goodwood, and developing understanding and respect for diversity by using face to face Skype technology with a school in Japan to learn about their life and culture. Opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of cultural diversity in the national context through links with a culturally diverse school community within the UK are not yet established. The school meets statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.