



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Ninfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Lane,
Ninfield, East Sussex.
TN33 9JW

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: **Chichester**

Local authority: East Sussex

Date of inspection: 14 June 2016

Date of last inspection: March 2010

School's unique reference number: 114515

Headteacher: Christopher Brown

Inspector's name and number: Kelly Dillon (trainee)

QA Assessor: Lizzie McWhirter 244

School context

Ninfield Church of England Primary School is a small rural school. There are currently 164 pupils on roll, principally coming from the surrounding areas of Ninfield and Hooe. However, a small percentage of pupils attend the school from Bexhill. Pupils are mainly of White British heritage. In March 2015 Ofsted judged the school as good and the Early Years provision as outstanding. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is consistently above national average. The school is currently in an interregnum but has been very proactive in developing links with other local churches and clergy.

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

- The Christian vision of school leadership is driving the school forward, ensuring that the school's Christian character is at the heart of school life.
- The excellent behaviour of pupils is underpinned by the Christian character of the school.
- The high quality of collective worship, in this rural church primary school, engages and enthuses pupils and uplifts other members of the school community, including staff, governors and parents.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that the monitoring and evaluation of the school, as a church school, is rigorous and systematic in its approach.
- Embed the school's Christian values so that children can articulate them more clearly, nurturing their spiritual development.
- Enable pupils to grow in their age-appropriate understanding of The Holy Trinity as a regular part of their worshipping life.

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

The strong Christian character of the school is pivotal to the development of all learners. Christian values are lived out in the life of the school and are instrumental in creating a calm and secure working environment. As a result, the behaviour of all pupils is of the highest standard. Children are keen to come to school and are highly motivated by all that it offers. The core Christian value of respect is seen as of utmost importance by all stakeholders in ensuring that such a positive learning experience is enjoyed by all. As a small school, Ninfield focuses on developing the individual. Relationships between all members of the school community are particularly strong. Consequently, these excellent partnerships are a key strength of the school with one staff member noting that they, 'create an ethos where children grow in self-esteem and confidence in an atmosphere of encouragement'. All God's children are valued. One parent stated that, 'every child is given the opportunity to shine'. In lessons pupils are engaged and focused and fully involved in their own learning. Academic achievement is particularly high: results at the end of Key Stage 2 are consistently above the national average. Whilst pupils are able to express the Christian values clearly, they are not yet deeply embedded within the daily life of the school. Parents feel that the distinct Christian character of the school enables staff to go, 'above and beyond the norm'. The Christian values, such as respect and perseverance, are beginning to contribute to the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of all learners. Children express their understanding of the world in a variety of ways: art, prayer and music. Religious education (RE) makes a positive contribution to the Christian character of the school. At every opportunity RE is brought into other areas of the curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils debating, 'Do you believe war is necessary?' are able to bring their own religious beliefs and those of others into the discussion. Since the last inspection, the school has effectively improved pupils' understanding of cultural diversity in Great Britain. Pupils display their understanding of diversity by confidently talking about the range of world faiths studied throughout the school. They explicitly make links between their own learning and how they can relate this to their own lives and to the understanding of others.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.

Collective worship has an extremely strong impact upon all members of the school community. It is fun and engaging, with high levels of pupil interaction. Collective worship is often inspiring and its strong message to follow Jesus' teaching in the Bible, impacts upon relationships throughout the whole community. Many adults, including staff, governors and parents talk about how motivational worship contributes to the caring Christian ethos of the school. School services in the church are very well attended, as are weekly acts of worship. Pupils are especially confident in sharing their biblical knowledge and can readily apply moral messages taken from worship to their own lives. Collective worship is carefully planned providing everyone with opportunities for prayer, reflection and spiritual growth. The Christian life of the school is especially celebrated through song. All pupils sing hymns with passion, whole-heartedly contributing towards an uplifting experience. Older pupils are particularly confident in articulating the Christian values and the theology that they are based upon. The school correctly recognises that more time in collective worship is needed to secure all pupils' understanding of The Holy Trinity in age-appropriate ways. Pupils find it hard to express what Christians believe about this key aspect of faith, drawing upon their experience of Christian worship in school. Since the beginning of an interregnum the school has actively sought to make links with other local churches and ministers. This has successfully broadened the range of visitors leading worship in the school. Collective worship is regularly evaluated and the school is beginning to involve more stakeholders in this process.

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

The headteacher, along with the governors and other senior leaders, has developed a strong Christian vision that impacts upon all areas of school life. Ninfield's motto, 'Believe and achieve together', encapsulates the school's commitment to the well-being of its pupils. Christian values underpin this and all stakeholders are able to articulate how this vision impacts upon their school. Pupil achievement is very high and the school's distinct Christian character, with its drive for every child to reach their full potential, impacts directly upon school standards. The whole school, including governors, work as a team under the direction of the headteacher to ensure the best for every child. One child talked about perseverance and how the awareness of this value encourages her to keep on trying and never give up. Pupils' strengths are celebrated and built upon. All pupils within this caring Christian community flourish. Their behaviour, founded upon key Christian values, is exemplary. School leaders have built a community where all feel valued, respected and safe. Since September 2015, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have taken over the leadership of RE. During this time, improvements have accelerated and the profile of the subject has been raised. Since its last inspection, the school has improved pupils' understanding of cultural diversity and the monitoring and evaluation of worship. Thus, RE and collective worship are well led and managed and meet statutory requirements. However, the school itself has already identified the need to ensure that the monitoring and evaluation of the school, as a church school, is improved. It acknowledges that self-evaluation of the school's Christian distinctiveness and its impact upon learners needs to become more systematic and robust. As a forward looking school, Ninfield is preparing for future leadership across church schools. The deputy headteacher, working in partnership with the headteacher, has been especially instrumental in driving the school forward since its last inspection. Ninfield School has very effective partnerships within the local community and is central to village life.

SIAMS report June 2016. Ninfield CE VC Church of England Primary School, TN33 9JW