

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	Nuthurst Street Nuthurst Horsham RH13 6LH
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Satisfactory
Diocese/Methodist District	Chichester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Good
Local authority	West Sussex
Date of inspection	20 September 2016
Date of last inspection	17 January 2011
School's unique reference number	126030
Headteacher	Nathan Golbey
Inspector's name and number	Connie Hughes 765

School context

St Andrew's CE Primary is a small rural school. There are 130 pupils on roll, divided into five classes. Pupils are mainly White British from the village of Nuthurst and the surrounding area. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average. There have been significant senior leadership, governance and staff changes during the last year. The headteacher, previously the deputy headteacher, has been in post since September 2015. There are strong links with St Andrew's Church in the village of Nuthurst.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Andrew's as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- The school's distinctive mission statement, 'Learning for life; Aiming for Excellence; Guided by God' significantly impacts on pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.
- Collective worship is an affirmation and celebration of the school's Christian ethos and Anglican tradition.
- Collective worship and religious education experiences contribute to pupils' understanding of the Bible, Christianity and other world faith belief and practices.
- The committed leadership of the headteacher, strongly supported by the Rector of St Andrew's, has embedded the school's Christian foundation in the daily life of the school community.

Areas to improve

- Through the planned review of the religious education curriculum, implement a more creative and personalised approach to planning, teaching and assessment, leading to greater challenge in pupils' learning.
- Develop the leadership role of the newly appointed religious education subject leader to secure good to outstanding teaching and learning experiences for all pupils.
- Establish the distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Andrew's as a church school as a strategic element of the school improvement plan.
- Through the Governing Body 'Teaching, Learning and Ethos' committee, establish explicit monitoring and self-evaluation strategies of collective worship and religious education to secure evidence of the school's Christian distinctiveness on the development of the whole child.

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

The school's Christian distinctiveness is becoming more explicit in the daily life of the school. An emphasis on bringing the school's long standing motto, 'Learning for Life; Aiming for Excellence; Guided by God' to life, has been at the heart of the school's mission for the last academic year. The school community can articulate what it means and how each aspect interrelates to securing all pupils' well-being and personal achievement within the context of its Christian faith foundation. Applying challenge and accountability, recently appointed school leaders and staff display a shared sense of purpose to inspire and raise pupils' expectations through improved teaching and learning. Although standards across the curriculum are improving, the pace and consistency of pupils' progress has fluctuated across the school. There is limited leadership monitoring and evaluative evidence of the impact of the school's Christian ethos in meeting the needs of all learners.

'Guided by God', underpins the pupils' chosen 'Golden Rules', reflecting how the teachings of Jesus and Christian values are lived out in the daily life of the school and celebrated on the school website gallery. Good pupil behaviour and positive relationships were evident across the age range. A member of staff explained, "the values of the school are shown in the actions of the children every day in the ways in which they help and support each other". Parents confidently shared, "that the school's Christian ethos and applied values in the daily life of the school have got stronger in the last year". Awards presented to pupils in Friday celebration worship, whose actions reflect the Golden Rules, was unanimously approved by parents. The revised and inclusive format for Sports Day in the summer term, "was like a family affair" when pupils' collaboration and teamwork was encouraged and cheered on by the whole school community. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education (SMSC) is a focus for curriculum development this academic year. Discussion with Key Stage 2 pupils on religious education and collective worship themes, including the current Christian value of theme of 'kindness and caring for others', emphasised their SMSC understanding of their learning experiences. Together they shared, "we gain knowledge and awareness... learn to understand and respect the beliefs of other people...to be a good neighbour...to follow Jesus". Pupils identify and support a range of local, national and global humanitarian charities including Children in Need and Comic Relief.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Daily collective worship, is central to the spiritual life of the school community. The recently updated worship policy and themed programme overview reflects the teachings of Jesus, Christian and moral values. There are strong links with the rector of St. Andrew's Church, who, as an ex-officio governor, is known within the school community as "a good support to parents and children". Working closely with the headteacher, he enables the school to explore and develop the school's Christian values and themes purposely contributing to pupils' SMSC development. The close proximity of St Andrew's church enables constant access for school worship services and support for pupils' knowledge, experience and understanding of Anglican traditions. Leading Wednesday weekly church services, the rector embraces distinctly biblical teaching, Christian beliefs and practice, the understanding of the Trinity, the use of liturgy, silence and meditation which are mirrored in school based worship. Observing the rector's wife delivering 'Godly Play', an established approach to class worship throughout the school, Year3/4 pupils explored their faith through the story of the Good Samaritan; quietly singing 'Be still and know I am God', listening attentively, reflecting and responding thoughtfully to the theme 'I know what I need to be a good neighbour' was spiritually awe inspiring. The headteacher led whole school worship through the theme of 'caring for others', stimulated by media images of the homeless, a biblical reading, worship responses, a moral story, prayer and singing. Pupils, staff and governors were fully engaged, responding with empathy and insight into the importance of living out their Golden Rules.

Defined reflection areas exist for pupils in every classroom to support worship themes, biblical knowledge, personal and class prayers. More structured learning experiences for pupils to engage more fully in the spiritual and prayer life of the school through these areas are being addressed. A focus on helping pupils learn how to pray is becoming an annual experience through planned 'Prayer Spaces' following its impact in the Spring term.

Although pupils are not consistently involved in planning worship experiences, active participation is apparent through worship organisation, personally written prayers and drama, including an emotive re-enactment of "The Passion" at Easter, and whole school participation in the Christingle Service. Inspiring and colourful altar frontals, designed and made with pupils are used on the school altar when celebrating significant events in the church calendar including Harvest, Advent and Pentecost.

There is not as yet a cohesive whole school policy supporting planning for content, structure, delivery and resourcing of worship to develop new staff expertise in delivering effective spiritual experiences. The governors' 'teaching, learning and ethos' committee recognise the urgent need for structured monitoring and evaluation of worship, enabling all pupils and adults to share thoughts and ideas to fulfil planned improvement.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

Plans are in place for the new religious education (RE) subject leader, with the support of the diocese, to review and evaluate effective policy and provision in light of the new local authority agreed syllabus. Pupils' have previously been judged by the school as making appropriate progress in RE when compared to progress in other subjects. Although school policy identifies applying RE attainment targets, 'learning about religion' and 'learning from religion' there is limited evidence of it accelerating pupil progress and raising standards. The school are addressing staff development to secure reliable evidence of assessment and marking strategies to accurately inform pupils' next steps in learning in all subjects, including RE, as a school priority.

RE learning provision, enjoyed by the pupils, contributes to their understanding of the Bible, Christianity and the incorporation of Christian values into the schools' Golden Rules. Lesson observations and a work scrutiny of RE/SMSC taught by the teaching team identified too much emphasis on whole class, teacher led focused work with a lack of differentiated creative activities to engage, support or challenge pupils of all abilities. During the inspection the majority of the RE/SMSC lessons were focused upon the Golden Rule 'we are kind and helpful' linked to biblical teaching and relationships in life. Exploring a map of Palestine in Jesus' lifetime Year 3/4 pupils were effectively engaged in extended their Godly Play class worship on the deeply spiritual meaning of the parable of the Good Samaritan; Jesus taught us how we should treat other people. Pupils in Year 4/5, through talk partners explored and interpreted media posters and inspirational quotes to determine societies and their interpretation of the Golden Rule.

Pupils have a good understanding of world faiths beliefs and practices of Judaism, Islam and Hinduism through religious education themes and supported by first-hand experience of visits to places of worship, including a Jewish synagogue, Muslim mosque and Hindu temple. Pupils explained, "we gain knowledge, an awareness of similarities and differences, to respect and understand different cultures".

Religious education is not good overall because there is no established structure for monitoring and evaluating the teaching of the subject to raise standards and secure a greater challenge in all pupils' learning.

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

The recently appointed headteacher's leadership strengths include active involvement in embedding and sustaining the school's Christian distinctiveness within the local community, church and diocese. Governors have worked with the headteacher, diocese and local authority to urgently address their organisational management in holding the school to account for its effectiveness. Governor roles and responsibilities have been clarified, including challenge and support for the school leadership team in ensuring the school's Christian character has a positive impact on the academic and well-being of all pupils. The overall leadership and management of St Andrew's as a church school is not yet good because there is limited quality evidence of its effectiveness in monitoring and evaluating the effect that the Christian ethos has on all pupils. Although there is a lack of high quality evidence, school leaders are now developing strategies to embed its church school distinctiveness. Through school improvement planning, self-evaluation strategies and professional development, staff and governors are focused on effective provision in self-governance, worship, RE leadership, and teaching and learning.

Parents and carers are confident that the headteacher, Rector, the parish and all staff care for the well-being of all their children. A member of the staff reflected, "our headteacher is really upholding the Christian principles through his leadership and liaison with St Andrew's Church". Year 6 pupils annually participate in the diocesan and school based Leavers Services, supported by families and friends of the school. The headteacher's explicit celebration of the school's distinctively Christian mission, values and Golden Rules have impacted significantly on their children's spiritual development.

Reflecting on the school's Christian foundation, parents explained, "the school's values are much more engrained and my son knows what they mean", "there is a heightened ethos of Christian values in action". The Rector has a strong, collaborative and spiritual presence in the school, supporting worship, religious education and providing pastoral support for the school community. The established church based toddler and youth groups support parents with their children's transition at significant times in their lives.

The school meets the statutory requirements for religious education and collective worship.