

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Peasmarsh Church of England Primary School

School Lane, Peasmarsh, East Sussex, TN31 6UW	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Chichester
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Good
Local Authority	East Sussex
Name of Federation	Peasmarsh and Beckley Federation
Date of inspection	28 April 2017
Date of last inspection	15-16 November 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary –Voluntary Controlled 114518
Executive Headteacher	Carolyn Weston
Head of School	Lison Smart
Inspector's name and number	Pamela Draycott (161)

School context

This small school has three mixed age classes and shares an executive headteacher with its federated school. The head of school came into post in September 2016 following a period of significant instability in leadership. The percentage of pupils for whom extra funding is received, due to social disadvantage, is above the national average, as is the percentage of those with a special educational need or disability (SEND). There is a higher than average percentage of pupils who enter or leave the school other than at the usual times. Most pupils are White British with and just over half coming from Christian faith backgrounds.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Peasmarsh Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The leadership of the head of school, capably supported by the executive headteacher and governors, is impacting extremely positively on the school's life and work through the renewed focus on the school's Christian vision and values.
- There is a thorough understanding of school performance which is clearly based on the importance of the individual as a unique and a child of God.
- Worship is central and contributes deeply to the school's spiritual life as it explores Christian beliefs and values and relates them closely to daily life.
- Based on its Christian foundation, pupils are well known and treated as individuals which supports their positive attitudes to learning very well.
- The provision of opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is very good resulting in positive responses from pupils.

Areas to improve

- Improve teaching and learning further by addressing how all areas of the curriculum are impacted by the school's Christian ethos and values and consequently how each area supports opportunities for SMSC development to take place.
- Ensure that assessment of religious education (RE) provides pupils with clear information about the steps they need to take to improve their learning and provides the school with accurate and detailed information about attainment and progress across each year group.

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

The school's Christian vision is focused on enabling all 'to love learning and to love your neighbour'. It has a very high profile and impacts extremely positively on school life. Examples of this are through the provision of a lively, colourful and safe learning environment and mutually respectful relationships. Relevant and regularly changed displays celebrate pupils' achievements very well. Its Christian foundation has been refreshed and strengthened across the course of this academic year and it is now an explicit driving force for current and future improvement. This refocusing on the school's Christian and inclusive identity is seen through its values of respect, courage, forgiveness, perseverance, love and tolerance. These are clearly linked to biblical teaching and well known and acted upon across the school community. Consequently, pupils' behaviour has improved. Likewise their sense of community and self-worth have also improved. Pupils are polite, caring and friendly. Staff know and care for the pupils' wellbeing very well. Individual's strengths are valued and their varying needs are very well catered for. This results in the vast majority of pupils being happy in school so that attendance has improved significantly. It is now just short of the national average from being well below during the previous academic year. On those few occasions where attendance or behaviour gets in the way of learning, staff work compassionately and fairly with the pupil, and, when appropriate with their family, to bring about a positive resolution. As befits the school's Christian foundation, pupils with a range of special educational needs or disabilities are closely supported. This means that they, along with the vast majority of their peers, are now making at least good and often very good progress from their various starting points. By the time pupils leave school attainment is broadly in line with national expectations when many entered the school below or well below expectations.

Pupils' SMSC development is very well catered for and they respond positively to these opportunities. RE, personal, social and health education (PHSE) and the worship programme support SMSC development very well: For example, through encouraging pupils to share their personal ideas and responses to religious and moral issues and through providing times of reflection. Pupils listen well and respectfully to each other. The curriculum overall is broad and balanced and well delivered. However, in documentation and planning links with the school's Christian ethos and with SMSC development are not made explicit.

RE makes an effective contribution to developing an understanding and appreciation of difference and diversity through its curriculum content. This focuses appropriately on Christianity and other world faiths as well as on values such as respect and tolerance.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is very well planned and delivered and plays a central role in the school's daily life. It is explicitly Christian in nature whilst being inclusive of the varying views represented across the school community. The new head of school rightly made improving the quality, range and impact of worship a key priority for development on her arrival. Her vision for improving the programme has resulted in high quality acts of worship which are aspirational and which support the spiritual and religious development of those involved very well. Pupils are increasingly taking responsibility for worship and engage positively and enthusiastically with it. Pupils and staff enjoy worship because they feel included and involved and see its relevance for 'bringing the community together to worship God and share love'. Many find it inspirational and relevant to their school and wider life. It impacts positively on helping pupils to consider how to behave in certain situations. One example of this is when exploring the biblical story of Daniel in the Lion's Den, pupils reflected on the things in their lives that meant they needed to display courage. When considering love they not only think about who or what they love, they also think about how they could show love to others, through for example, charitable giving and by, 'being a friend when someone is upset or lonely'. Through worship pupils are developing an age-appropriate appreciation of the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit: 'The Father sort of takes care of you, Jesus is the Son and died on the cross and the Holy Spirit is with you to help you,' as a Year 4 pupil reflected. They are also addressing the significance and meaning of the Lord's Prayer. Pupils recognise it as an important Christian prayer and that, as a Year 6 pupil said, 'it teaches us to forgive others like God forgives us'. A good relationship exists between the school and the church which effectively supports the spiritual growth of members of the school community. A member of the governing body who is the local vicar, ensures that a member of his team leads worship regularly. His involvement provides positive opportunities for pastoral care and support. Pupils are familiar with aspects of traditional Anglican practice such as lighting candles and different seasons of the Christian year. Worship in school is enhanced through periodic opportunities to worship in the parish church.

Through prayer and worship pupils are developing a detailed understanding of the significance of Jesus for Christians. The regularity and importance of prayer within the school community has increased significantly since the time of the previous denominational inspection and particularly over this past academic year with significant and

deep impact. A Reception aged child said, 'Prayer is talking to God and saying thank you for things', whilst a Year 6 pupil said, 'Prayer is significant because it helps to clear your mind and thoughts and rely on God. Asking God to help others is important rather than just being selfish and praying for yourself all the time'. Many pupils are keen to contribute to prayer during worship either written or spontaneously. This practice is now well established.

Monitoring and evaluating the worship programme is carried out by senior leaders, governors, staff and increasingly by pupils. It is acted upon appropriately to enhance provision further.

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

A concerted approach to renewing and refreshing the school's Christian vision and values has been a key driver for improvement over the past academic year. Although relatively recent it has reshaped school life and practice in a deep and meaningful way. The head of school, ably supported by the executive headteacher and governors, is working in a focused manner to continue this. The staff team is working collaboratively together and with the headteacher. Pupils and parents are well aware of the renewed emphasis on the school's Christian ethos and recognise its value and impact on the quality of care and support for learning given by staff.

The governing body is very well led by a chair and vice chair who are deeply committed to improving the academic outcomes for pupils alongside their personal development and wellbeing. This is rightly recognised as a clear expression of the school's Christian service to its community. With this in mind, there is a rigorous staff appraisal system and challenging targets for pupils' progress are set. Appropriate support and training for working within the church school sector is provided for staff. The school's self-evaluation of its distinctiveness and effectiveness as a church school is detailed and reflects the school well in terms of identifying key strengths and areas for development. Despite the turbulence in leadership since the previous denominational inspection, key areas for development in terms of the role of governors in monitoring and evaluating the school's Christian distinctiveness and specifically of worship have been well addressed. Developed plans are in place to ensure further collaborative working with its partner school. For example, the RE subject leader has begun to work in both schools to improve content and approaches to learning across the subject. This is based on some new materials for teaching Christianity alongside the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The RE subject leader has only been in post since September 2016. Due to her good leadership during this time she has effectively improved some aspects of teaching and learning in RE. However, effective assessment of RE is not well developed. This means that pupils do not consistently know how well they are doing or what they specifically need to do to improve their learning further. Similarly, tracking of RE attainment and progress at school level is not effectively in place. Both RE and worship are appropriately resourced and statutory requirements are met.

Parents are supportive of the school and recognise the 'family feel and care' provided for their children by senior leaders and staff. They see this as having improved significantly over the past year. There is a helpful partnership between school and church. Examples of this include visits from the priest to school and the school to church as well as involvement with the governance of the school. These are clear expressions of their shared mission of service to the community. Other links with the local community are in place but the school has rightly identified the need to extend these further. The school is drawing well on support provided by the Diocese through, for example, attendance at courses and through the work of the diocesan improvement partner. This is contributing well to the school's Christian distinctiveness and effectiveness and advice given is clearly acted upon.

SIAMS report (April 2017) Peasmarsh CE Primary School, Rye, East Sussex, TN31 6UW