



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Sir Henry Fermor Church of England Primary School

Crowborough Hill
Crowborough
East Sussex
TN6 2SD

Previous SIAMS grade: Not previously inspected as an academy

Current inspection grade: Satisfactory

Diocese: Chichester

Local authority: N/A

Date of inspection: 5 May 2016

Date of last inspection: N/A

School's unique reference number: 142611

Headteacher: Sarah Griggs (Acting)

Inspector's name and number: Connie Hughes 765

School context

Sir Henry Fermor Primary is a two form entry school with 379 pupils on roll. 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, staff and governance changes since the last inspection. An Interim Education Board (IEB), including members of the Local Authority and Diocese, have been governing the school since March 2015. The current acting headteacher has been in place since January this year. On April 1st 2016 the school became an Academy and joined the Tenax Schools Trust, a Church of England multi-academy trust. Following an interregnum, a new vicar was appointed in February 2016.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Sir Henry Fermor as a Church of England school is satisfactory

- The school's core value of 'respect' contributes to the school's Christian ethos, underpinning pupils' feelings of happiness, care and well-being.
- Collective worship, led in partnership with All Saints Church clergy, contributes to pupils' biblical knowledge and their spiritual and moral development.
- Religious education (RE) teaching is increasingly contributing to pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other world faiths and beliefs.
- The interventions of the IEB, the interim leadership team and the Tenax Trust are developing the school's Christian distinctiveness.

Areas to improve

- Extend the use of 'pause for reflection' areas in each classroom through interactive learning experiences to enable pupils to engage more fully in RE, prayer and worship themes.
- Improve all pupils' ownership of collective worship through greater involvement in its planning, delivery and evaluation.
- Raise the quality of RE teaching, monitoring and evaluation to ensure all teaching provides activities pitched at appropriate levels to challenge pupils of all abilities.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the planned professional development programme on teaching and learning to secure explicit evidence of the school's distinctive Christian character.

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

Due to significant changes in senior leadership since the last inspection there is a lack of high quality evidence of the effect that the Christian ethos has on meeting the needs of all learners. Although standards across the curriculum are improving, including in RE, the pace and consistency of pupils' progress fluctuates across the school. Actions introduced by the highly effective IEB and the school's most recent interim senior leaders, indicate the school's Christian distinctiveness is becoming more explicit in the daily life of the school. Pertinent displays, including RE themes and school rule 'respect' posters with biblical references, placed in all classrooms and communal areas reflect the school's Christian foundation. The increasingly strong Christian ethos is apparent in the good behaviour, attitudes and relationships between staff and pupils. A Year 5 teacher, encompassing the views of the staff team stated, "wrap around care with our Christian ethos ensures that our pupils feel safe and secure at school". Pupils confidently stated staff are always "cheerful, generous, forgiving and supportive". Placing more emphasis on threading Christian and British values throughout the curriculum is contributing to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. When questioned about how the school's value of 'respect' and its motto 'Please God in all we do', affected them, pupils explained "like the laws in the Bible...we follow Jesus' word in how we treat others." In a vibrant hall display of hands entitled 'Hallelujah Fermor', all pupils share their understanding of the school motto, stating, "we make people feel welcome everyone has friends...I am proud that God is with us every step of the way". Year 6 pupils, well supported by parents, annually attend a Christian residential centre, enhancing their personal, social and spiritual development. Increasing numbers of Key Stage 2 pupils attend a weekly Christian club led by members of All Saints Church. Classroom 'pause for reflection' areas are in place, with Christian and world faith artefacts and prayer guidance, but more planned learning opportunities for all pupils to engage and reflect are required if these are to impact fully on pupils' SMSC development. A range of charitable events raise pupils' awareness and response to local, national and global issues, such as links with a Christian church in Burundi and specific support for a family in the school through fundraising for the national charity, 'Tree of Hope'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Through strong links with All Saints Church clergy and community the school's collective worship practice effectively introduces all pupils to the experience of Christian worship. Weekly worship themes, planned by the deputy headteacher and curate, incorporate Biblical stories and teachings, songs and prayers which enable pupils to enjoy and engage in active learning, spiritual and moral reflection. Monthly church services, religious artefacts, music, liturgical greetings and responses develop pupils' understanding of Anglican symbols, traditions and beliefs. Significantly, clergy delivery of Monday morning school worship provides specific teaching of Biblical and Christian values and theological guidance for staff which enhances pupils' worship experiences throughout the week. The whole school worship, observed in the inspection, led by the curate, on the important events of Ascension Day had a clear focus on God's constant loving relationship with His people through the Trinity. Joyful learning of a 'rap' and inspiring and spontaneous songs of praise, enabled pupils to reflect, "Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus will never lose touch with us." Collective and personal prayer is becoming an integral part of the school day. Pupils and parents shared their recent 'teaspoon' prayer guidance from the curate, saying thank you, sorry and please in their conversations with God. Although some year groups successfully present dramatic and musical productions of key Christian celebrations, including 'Resurrection Rock' at Easter, this is not inclusive of all year groups. The school has yet to structure a planned programme of class led school worship to ensure all pupils have the opportunity to engage, contribute and reflect on the school's distinctive Christian ethos. The strong relationship between school and church led worship has impacted on increased pupil attendance at the Easter holiday club, church youth group and Sunday services.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

The RE subject leader, supported by the diocese, introduced a revised curriculum in January 2016, and this is in the process of being implemented. Recent joint monitoring of RE by the deputy headteacher and subject leader, including lesson observations, work scrutiny and collaboration with teachers indicate standards of attainment and achievement are gradually improving. When questioned, pupils confidently shared the view that “we enjoy RE. We are learning about Christianity, different religions and to respect what other people believe”. Inspiring and thought provoking lessons were observed across the school as pupils applied their learning about Christianity, world faiths, the school rule and value of ‘respect’. Through the use of colourful digital photographs and visual prompts of God’s creation of the world, Reception class pupils fully engaged with their talk partners, as they linked their school rule of ‘respect’, care for their world and methods of recycling. Key Stage 1 pupils, creating Jewish Mezuzah boxes, applied the purpose of them to their own lives, “reminding us that God is always with us... how He wants us to live our lives” and the school rule of ‘respect’. Pupils in Key Stage 2 looked on with respect, awe and wonder as their teacher shared her grandmother’s legacy of her over one-hundred-year-old “my precious Bible” with its poignant Christian notecards and family messages. Scrutiny of Key Stage 1 and 2 RE books, year group joint planning records and lesson observations identified too much emphasis on photocopied sheets, reflecting a lack of differentiated and independent activities to support or challenge pupils’ learning experiences. Assessment and marking strategies, are not sufficiently developed to challenge all pupils to improve their work in RE. The recently compiled subject leader’s RE portfolio, lesson observations and teacher reviews are evidence of the commitment of the RE subject leader in developing effective teaching and learning. Although progress in RE is identifiable, there is a lack of appropriate differentiation to challenge pupils of all abilities.

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

Following a difficult and sustained period of multiple leadership changes, the overall leadership and management of Sir Henry Fermor as a church school is satisfactory. Identifying the impact of the school’s Christian character on the academic achievement and personal development of the whole school community is not currently embedded in the school’s cycle of monitoring and evaluation. The IEB, taking over the responsibilities of governance, identified the need to embed explicit Church school distinctiveness in preparation for the SIAMS inspection. Following a period of limited progress, the IEB delegated responsibility to the current school interim leadership team. Incorporating the expertise and established Christian ethos of the Tenax Trust, all leaders are now focused upon ‘cultivating Christian awareness as central to the education mission of the school’. Plans are in place to cascade planned professional development in church school leadership, to deliver effective collective worship and RE and to enhance whole staff knowledge and succession planning. A substantive headteacher has been appointed for September 2016.

Partnership with All Saints Church is strong, supporting school worship, RE and music and providing for the spiritual and pastoral well-being of the school community. Parents, including members of All Saints Church and Forest Fold Baptist Church, participate in a termly adult prayer meeting at the school. Parents commend the acting headteacher as “very approachable and responsive to the needs of their children.” Although parents are fully appreciative of the whole school staff team who model “kindness and caring in an inclusive family environment”, some found it difficult to connect their children’s experiences and success to the school’s faith foundation. Friends of Fermor School (FoFS) are active in fundraising through school and community events and contribute significantly to resources for the school. The requirements for collective worship and RE are met.

SIAMS report May 2016 Sir Henry Fermor Primary School Crowborough TN6 2SD