

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Ticehurst and Flimwell Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Steellands Rise
Ticehurst
East Sussex
TN5 7DH

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Satisfactory

Diocese: Chichester

Local authority: East Sussex

Dates of inspection: 25 May 2016

Date of last inspection: 22 July 2010

School's unique reference number: 114524

Headteacher: Fiona Sayers

Inspector's name and number: Connie Hughes 765

School context

Ticehurst and Flimwell is a small rural primary school. Pupils are mainly white British from the two villages it serves and the surrounding area. There are currently 116 pupils on roll divided into a reception class and four mixed age classes. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is slightly lower than the national average. There have been significant leadership and staff changes in recent years. The headteacher has been in post since January 2013. There are currently no Anglican clergy attached to the school. An independent nursery with wrap around care from birth to five is provided on the school site.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness Ticehurst and Flimwell as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- Adults and pupils relate well to each other in an atmosphere of mutual respect, support and shared well-being.
- Distinctively Christian teaching in collective worship contributes to pupils' understanding of Anglican traditions and beliefs and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Classroom reflection areas contribute to pupils' engagement in collective worship themes.
- Religious education (RE) experiences contribute to pupils' understanding of the Bible, Christianity and other world faith beliefs and practices.

Areas to improve

- Make explicit to the school community how the impact of school's chosen Christian values enable all pupils to flourish academically and spiritually in the daily life of the school.
- Develop a greater richness to the prayer life of the school through planned and structured experiences for pupils to engage with prayer
- Promote RE as a core subject, securing leadership and developing teachers so that the quality of teaching and learning challenges pupils of all abilities.
- Through governing body monitoring of RE, collective worship and the application of Christian values secure evidence of the impact of its church school ethos on the daily life of the school.

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

Following a difficult period of senior leadership, staff changes and a focus on improving classroom provision there is a lack of high quality evidence of the effect that the Christian ethos has on meeting the needs of all learners. School documentation states, 'we recognise that children's pastoral needs are important but have ensured that academic achievement has a much higher profile than in the past to ensure that all children have the chance to be successful in life.' Standards have risen steadily over the past three years and all groups of pupils now make good progress. Within the school vision 'Aim high and succeed. Aspire, believe, co-operate, achieve: learning without limits', school leaders identify 'believe' as reflecting the school's ethos.

Reference on the school website to 'the core Christian values of respect, compassion, empathy and tolerance', is not explicit in identifying how these values impact on pupil outcomes. Pupils' and the school community are not fully aware of their biblical significance. Although distinctive Christian messages are recognised as important by school leaders, strategies to evaluate its effectiveness as a church school are not fully embedded.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is a strength of the school. Adults and pupils relate well to each other in an atmosphere of mutual respect, support and shared well-being. Pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, identify with the school's church foundation, through collective worship experiences, the improving provision for RE and relevant displays around the school. RE experiences, more consistently taught this academic year, contribute to pupils' understanding of the Bible, Christianity and other world faith beliefs and practices. Using multimedia, pupils in Key Stage 1 were exploring ways of praying and the importance of prayer to Christians and Muslims as a means of talking to God and Allah. Citizenship, British and Christian values were evident in the roles and responsibilities happily taken on by pupils, for example, pet monitors, playtime leaders, grandparent events and participation in the annual Remembrance Day service in the village. Participation in a range of charitable events raises pupils' awareness and response to local, national and global issues, e.g. Guide Dogs for the Blind and Children in Need.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Distinctively Christian teaching in collective worship contributes to pupils' application of Anglican traditions and beliefs and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Since September 2015, through the leadership of the Headteacher, a more consistent approach to the structure, resources and content of worship has been established with the teaching team..

Worship themes incorporate Christian and British values, biblical stories, music, drama and the Lord's Prayer, significantly promoting pupils' spiritual development. It is further enhanced through the symbolism of lighting three candles for the Trinity, reflection and liturgical responses. In the observed headteacher led worship, pupils reflected upon 'tolerance' in relation to the worship theme of 'Koinonia-fellowship'. Creatively supported by staff and pupils, the school community were fully engaged; relating Jesus's actions and relationships with His people to their understanding of the impact of their behaviour and attitudes to others. Pupils contributions included, "tolerance is a British value" and "Jesus was extremely tolerant and welcomed all". Parents and carers regularly attend class-led worship and Year 5/6 highly positive pupil responses were recently reported in the weekly newsletter. Classroom reflection areas contribute to pupils' understanding and engagement in CW themes. Although the opportunity to pray is increasingly common in the school day, including lunch time, whole school planned and structured learning experiences have not yet been achieved. Significant festivals in the Anglican calendar take place in St Mary's Church, including Christmas, Easter and Harvest. At a recent Easter service, one class baked hot cross buns and distributed these to parents and carers who attended. Although the systems for monitoring and evaluating collective worship by pupils, staff and school leaders are in place, they have not yet been applied to gather sufficient evidence of the impact on the spiritual, moral and social development of the school community. There are currently no Anglican clergy attached to the school nor a range of leaders from different Christian traditions to support and enrich pupils' experience of worship.

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

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of Ticehurst and Flimwell as a church school are judged as satisfactory, as an explicit Christian vision has yet to be fully articulated and evidenced by school leaders and governors. Identifying the impact of its school's Christian character on the academic achievement and personal development of the whole school community is not currently embedded in the senior leadership and foundation governors' cycle of self-evaluation. With good and effective practice for securing school improvement recently identified by Ofsted, the headteacher, senior leaders and governors have the capacity to achieve and sustain agreed church school improvement priorities. The foundation governors are attending diocesan church school governance training, enabling them to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. Due to staff changes over a substantial period of time, substantive and effective RE subject leadership and staff professional development to meet the needs of all pupils has been limited.

The villages and churches of St Mary's and St Augustine's are historically linked to the school, through its clergy involvement in worship, appointed foundation governors and as an education resource for pupils. Although a recently appointed 'family worker' has introduced a well-received two session fortnightly Bible story club, one for the reception class with Key Stage 1 and one for Key Stage 2 pupils, the church partnership is currently limited due to a clergy interregnum. Through the well-received weekly newsletter the school informs parents and carers of school events, pupil celebrations and the services and activities held in St Mary's Church in Ticehurst. Recently the school choir sang to the village lunchtime Good Companions Club. The school has worked in close partnership with the Local Authority to secure school improvement. Year 6 pupils regularly attend and participate in the diocesan annual Leavers' Service. Parents and carers are confident the school is "a nurturing community where their children are happy, safe and cared for" and where "sharing is caring."

The statutory requirements for collective acts of worship and religious education are met.

SIAMS report May 2016 Ticehurst and Flimwell CE Primary School TN5 7DH