

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Peter's Church of England Primary School	
Holmans, Street Lane, Ardingly, West Sussex, RH17 6UQ	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Chichester
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	West Sussex
Date of inspection	28 September 2017
Date of last inspection	30 January 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 126005
Headteacher	Jamie Savage
Inspector's name and number	Connie Hughes 765

School context

St Peter's Church of England Primary school, is a small rural school. There are 102 pupils on roll, divided into five classes from the village of Ardingly and the surrounding area. The majority of pupils are White British from a range of social and economic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is below the national average. Significant leadership, staff changes and pupil mobility have impacted upon the stability of the school. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2013 and the deputy headteacher from September 2015. The school has a strong and well-established partnership with St Peter's church, Ardingly.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Peter's Primary school as a Church of England school are good

- High quality pastoral care and support nurtures the development of the whole child, enabling all pupils to feel personally valued, happy and secure.
- Explicit Christian values underpin the beliefs, behaviours and attitudes of all pupils.
- Engaging and inspiring religious education and collective worship contribute to pupils' good knowledge and understanding of Christianity, the Bible and world faiths.
- Under the guidance of senior leaders, staff and clergy the Christian character of the school has a significant impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Areas to improve

- Improve all pupils' ownership of school based collective worship through greater involvement in its planning, delivery and evaluation.
- Provide structured learning experiences for pupils to plan, engage and deliver a greater richness to the prayer life of the school.
- Senior leaders and governors to ensure all stakeholders are engaged in rigorous self-evaluation that drives school improvement planning to secure evidence of the impact of St Peter's as a church school on the academic achievement, personal development and well-being of all pupils.

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

The explicit mission statement 'Hand in hand we journey together, guided by God', and their six chosen values embrace the school's Christian foundation. The school crest incorporates the school vision of 'Achieve-Believe-Create', the Christian symbol of the fish and the crossed keys of heaven, traditionally held by St Peter. Pupils clearly articulate their understanding of the school crest in relation to their 'Golden Key to Good Learning Behaviour' and its close association with gospel values; "Jesus has made a better world for us... we practice His values".

Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. "The children, school and wider community embrace Christian values and show it every day in how they treat one another with kindness, love and respect", is the view of the staff. Pupils' good behaviour and attitudes to learning are reflected in a calm and purposeful atmosphere throughout the school. Standards in pupil achievement have fluctuated across the school in recent years due to high levels of pupil mobility and on-going staff recruitment and retention issues. Securing greater consistency in the quality of teaching, learning experiences and assessment processes so all pupils have the skills to progress in their learning is an on-going priority focus for the school. The most recent national test results show a significant increase in pupil achievement, reversing the below national standards of the previous year. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is strong.

With a strong focus on the school's vision 'Achieve-Believe-Create' all pupils are encouraged to take responsibility, participate and achieve personal success in a range of curricular and extra-curricular activities. Pupils willingly take on a range of roles; house captains, school councillors, eco-councillors and peer-mediators. Guided by the school council all pupils in mixed age groups participate in 'democratic circle' discussions on the importance of applying Christian and British values across the world; for example, understanding the challenges faced by refugees and asylum seekers in a global society. Pertinent displays highlight a breadth of learning experiences which purposefully contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. These include pupils' personal contributions to the school prayer tree, visual representation of Bible stories, a 'friendship wall of kindness and love', individual, team and whole school successful sporting events. In weekly celebration assemblies, pupils are nominated for modelling the school vision and values through their behaviour; they receive 'golden fish awards' and the 'Citizenship Cup', praising their care for their peers and the wider community. The issues identified for development in the previous inspection have been addressed. Through the development of key Christian concepts religious education makes a good contribution to the Christian and Anglican character of the school. Interactive and enquiry based learning experiences develop pupil's knowledge of Christianity and world faiths. The strong partnership with St Peter's church, visits to a local mosque and a parent's contribution to understanding Judaism have enhanced pupils' experience of differing faiths and beliefs within the local, wider and global community. Discrimination is not tolerated. There is a breadth of support for charity, including Children in Need, the Shoe Box Appeal and harvest thanksgiving donations for the Chichester Diocese Association for Family Support.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship significantly influences the Christian vision and ethos of the school. Guided by the senior leaders and daily staff attendance it consolidates the importance of whole school Christian worship experiences in the daily life of the school. Worship themes incorporate biblical stories, the teachings of Jesus, inspirational Christian leaders' actions, songs and prayers. They enable all pupils and staff to enjoy and engage in active learning and spiritual and moral reflection. An informative worship display guides pupil through the cycle of Christian values worship themes, the significance of The Lord's Prayer and Anglican symbolism. Pupils were attentive and responsive to headteacher led school worship. Music on entry, stimulating photographs and the lighting a candle for 'Jesus is the light of the world' created a calm, quiet atmosphere, encouraging personal reflection. Creative and inspiring use of multimedia, role play, song and prayer purposefully contributed to pupils' SMSC development. Through the growth of 'Seeds of Love' and applying the value of 'respect' for God's world, pupils were given guidance and understanding in preparation for their imminent Key Stage I led Harvest Thanksgiving celebration in St Peter's church. Pupils responded well, sharing personal experiences when challenged to act as Jesus would, "do to others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6v31). Through the inspiring singing of 'Everywhere around me...', pupils and staff joyfully celebrated the beauty of God's world. The vicar of St Peter's leads weekly school based worship and through this an understanding of the centrality of God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to the Christian faith and familiarity with Anglican responses are developed.

The established partnership between the school and St Peter's is a significant strength in celebrating the school's Christian foundation in the community. Instigated by the headteacher, pupils lead worship at major Christian festivals tied in with the church's year and the annual Year 6 Leaver's Service at St Peter's church. These are well-attended by parents, carers and the community. "It's when everyone comes together" say the pupils. Parents state, "there is a community spirit at the church festivals". There is, however, limited evidence of more regular pupil involvement in planning, delivering and evaluating school based worship. Conversations with pupils and adults indicate that worship is both valued and transformational. However, there is a lack of formal monitoring, and

therefore also the strategic conversations that lead to long-term consistency of provision, quality and impact on the whole life of the school. Although prayer, including the school prayer, is central to school worship and lunchtime thanksgiving, a focus on inspiring structured prayer and reflection experiences, involving all pupils, is lacking.

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

Senior leaders in their behaviours and actions communicate a strong Christian faith foundation to the whole school community. Since the last inspection a significant period of unstable staffing and vacancies on the governing body have brought serious challenges and led to an all-round fall in standards. The commitment of the current team to return to a position of excellence has led to major improvements. The clear vision for the future shared by staff and governors is a strength of the school. The primary focus on getting things right for the pupils is securely underpinned by a shared Christian vision and applied values and positive outcomes can be seen. The Ofsted report in the last academic year recognises significant improvement in the senior leadership and management of the school. The headteacher, fully supported by the deputy headteacher, has halted a decline in standards. The procedures for robust monitoring and evaluation have been identified and form part of the improvement plan but are not yet all in place. Appointing permanent teaching and support staff with professional expertise to continue to enrich provision for all pupils is a priority for school leaders in the current academic year. Governing body recruitment has resulted in all positions filled, including foundation governor representation. Foundation governors confidently articulate and demonstrate the embedded vision and values of the school as a Church of England school in their observations when regularly participating in a range of school events. However, there is limited explicit evidence of senior leaders and governing body strategic development regarding the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of distinctly Christian values, religious education and worship in school improvement planning. For the school to be judged as outstanding all stakeholders have to be engaged in regular and rigorous reviews of the impact of the effectiveness of school's Christian characteristics on the daily lives and achievements of all learners. Partnerships with the local authority (LA), the diocese of Chichester, the local area church and community schools to address school improvement are a strength of the school. Targeted professional development through the school's attached LA and diocesan effectiveness partners includes guidance on effective curriculum leadership, monitoring, evaluation and assessment practices whilst holding the leadership team to account for evidence of impact. Governor and senior leadership attendance at training events is being cascaded to the school team, for example, LA led roles and responsibilities of school governors, effective religious education and worship. The strong links with St Peter's church enhances the school's and community's understanding of its Anglican foundation. Pupils' colourful and imaginative presentation of termly worship themes and religious education are regularly displayed and "make the church a more stimulating environment". They "are appreciated by church members and commented upon in the weekday visitors book". The school has a good reputation in the village. Parents recognise the school is trying to restore parents' confidence following the difficulties the school has faced in recent years. Although parents, when interviewed by the inspector, explained, "the staff strongly endorse the school's Christian ethos", structured responses from the school community on the impact of the school's Christian character on pupils' daily lives have yet to be fully explored. The headteacher communicates effectively with parents and carers in eye-catching and informative fortnightly newsletters; they include updates on curricular and ex-curricular activities, charity fundraising, church links and village events. The termly collective worship theme, at the request of a parent, is now incorporated into the newsletter, indicative of the importance of church school distinctiveness in the life of the wider school community. Friends of St Peter's school (FOSPS) parents' association play an active role in supporting school and community events, including, sports day, charity fundraising and the annual summer Ardingly village 'party in the park'. The school meets the statutory requirements for religious education and collective worship.

SIAMS report September 2017 St Peter's Church of England Primary School, Ardingly, West Sussex. RH17 6UQ