

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

High Hurstwood Church of England Primary School	
High Hurstwood Church of England Primary School, Chillies Lane, High Hurstwood, TN22 4AD	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Chichester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	East Sussex
Name of multi-academy trust / federation [delete as appropriate]	N/A
Date/s of inspection	13 September 2017
Date of last inspection	24 January 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary controlled 114507
Headteacher	Jane Cook
Inspector's name and number	Gillian Bradnam
Quality assurance	Lyn Field 151

School context

The school is a smaller than average-sized primary school serving the village and surrounding area. The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives extra funding due to social disadvantage is below the national average, whereas the proportion with special educational needs is above the national average. The school had an Ofsted inspection in February 2017. The parish has had a short interregnum following the retirement of the priest in charge and a new priest is being licenced this month. The school is a strategic partner in the St Mark's Teaching School Alliance.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of High Hurstwood as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The headteacher is an exceptional leader who leads with great passion and significant commitment. She models consistently the Christian distinctiveness of the school's vision and values to all, which leads to a warm, welcoming and highly supportive church school community in which all pupils can achieve their potential.
- The exemplary care and attention given to each individual pupil, rooted in the strong Christian distinctiveness of the school's values and ethos, ensures that all pupils feel valued and this makes a significant impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) of pupils and their achievements.
- The excellent behaviour of pupils, demonstrating respect and care for one another across all year groups leads to a palpable sense of family throughout the whole school community, reflecting the distinctively Christian values and ethos of the school.
- The strong links with Holy Trinity church contribute positively to the governance of the school as well as its spiritual life.

Areas to improve

- Involve the pupils in the planning and leading of collective worship in order to grow their confidence in leading acts of worship. Link this with the school development plan to aid the breadth of input into collective worship.
- Strengthen the pupils' ability to articulate explicitly Christian traditions in worship and their knowledge of Christian festivals, to increase their awareness of the nature and purpose of worship.

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

The school's vision and Christian values are linked strongly and consistently to the school's termly Christian themes by biblical references and Bible stories and as a result all members of the community are clear about the Christian distinctiveness of the school. This linkage has enabled the values to become deeply embedded in the daily life of the school. Pupils, staff, parents and governors are able to articulate the fundamental importance of the school being a church school, because of the way that it shapes and permeates all aspects of school life. God is at the centre of the school and a comment that summed this up was 'Jesus is at the heart of the school. Jesus is central to our lives.'

Practice at the school is strong and explicitly reflects the distinctively Christian roots of the school. This enables the school's Christian values to have a very positive impact on pupil achievements, behaviour, care and respect of others. By carefully targeting the needs of each individual pupil, all pupils are able to thrive and, in line with the school's Christian vision, achieve their potential. Pupils with special educational and emotional needs receive on-going support and help from outside agencies, where appropriate, to ensure that they achieve as well as their peers. This is evident in the above average achievement by pupils in national assessments, high attendance and for example, the care and friendship provided by the Year 6 – Year Reception buddy system.

There are rich opportunities for personal spiritual development across all subjects, in collective worship and through regular times for reflection and prayer in the school day. RE contributes strongly to the SMSC development of each pupil, with high quality opportunities extending across the curriculum. Themes in collective worship are also explored across the curriculum, which aids the pupils' knowledge and understanding relating to the school's Christian values. RE is exciting and challenging for pupils. This aids their progress and attainment in RE. Christianity is known to be a multi-cultural world faith by the pupils. One pupil explained that 'learning about different world faiths in RE helps us to understand and respect people of other faiths who we might meet in our local community or when on holiday.'

The school is inclusive of those with a faith and those with no faith, which reflects the school's ethos of everyone being valued, respected and belonging within the school community. Strong links with Holy Trinity church are valued highly by all in the school community, including the regular services and church led activities such as messy church, which support the distinctively Christian ethos of the school.

The pupils support a range of charities. The associated activities to raise funds reflect the school's Christian values in relation to those in need in the United Kingdom and around the world. The pupils have sponsored a girl growing up in India, who is now a nurse. This has enabled them to see how access to education can change the life chances and wellbeing of an individual. They have recently started to sponsor a new child, demonstrating their on-going commitment to social responsibility as an outworking of the Christian ethos of the school in the wider world.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship plays an important part in the life of the school for the pupils, staff and governors. It reflects and reinforces the school's distinctively Christian values. It is a time when 'learning about the Bible can be fun'. Bible stories are linked to examples from the pupils' everyday lives to ensure that they are relevant. This results in pupils being attentive, respectful and happy to contribute in collective worship. Beyond this, the positive impact of collective worship on pupils' attitudes, behaviour and their relationships with their peers and adults is evident in the classrooms and around the school generally. Pupils have some understanding of different Christian traditions in worship and Christian festivals though they cannot always articulate these.

In addition to biblical references, the songs and hymns sung and the prayers that are chosen consistently reflect the school theme for the term and keep Jesus Christ central to worship. This helps to contribute to the school's holistic, Christian approach to SMSC development, in particular, the personal spiritual development of pupils. Prayer is valued as a time when pupils can 'talk to God', within worship and at different times throughout the school day. Pupils learn about Jesus Christ in collective worship and have some understanding of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Trinity continues to be reinforced to pupils in collective worship. Whilst pupils enjoy contributing in worship, they are not involved in helping to plan and lead worship. This limits their opportunity to help shape the content of collective worship and the range of approaches used.

Collective worship is thoroughly planned by the headteacher and the priest in charge on a regular, termly basis. The worship themes are planned to relate directly to the school's Christian values, the SMSC programme, RE and the wider curriculum. As a result, pupils can identify how the school's Christian values are intertwined in worship, RE and across the curriculum.

Governors, staff and pupils contribute to the monitoring of collective worship, which helps to determine future developments. For example, comments from pupils are placed in a display book about collective worship and this

is added to as the school year progresses. School leaders then regularly refer to these comments as part of their monitoring of collective worship.

School services are well attended and enjoyed by parents and pupils. The previous priest was much loved by pupils and the incoming priest has already excited their interest. The church's input through services and activities, has aided the spiritual development of parents as well as pupils.

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

The headteacher is an exceptionally supportive and effective leader. Her vision is 'caring for all and nurturing them within a Christian ethos', where 'the Christian character is the heartbeat of the school'. The headteacher's significant commitment to the school as a church school and the value that she places on each and every individual are a key factor in the school's success. All school leaders consistently and confidently articulate, live out and promote the vision rooted in distinctively Christian values.

School leaders have a thorough understanding of the school's performance, informed by accurate self-evaluation, involving the views of pupils, parents, staff and governors. This enables leaders to make secure judgements and to plan effectively and strategically for the future. As a result there is a clear focus on developments that will have a positive impact for pupils as learners and on their individual all round SMSC development, with reference to the school's Christian values. Since the last inspection, the governors are using the SIAMS self-evaluation toolkit regularly in governors' meetings and this has proved to be 'a helpful prompt for what to consider and priorities in relation to the school as a church school'.

There are very strong links between Holy Trinity church and the school, which are mutually beneficial. For example regular activities and services run by the church aid the spiritual development of the whole school community. Equally, the church benefits from the use of school facilities and greater involvement by families, helping to 'keep the church growing through the next generation'. The school has strategically prioritised training for staff and governors via the Diocese. This is having a positive impact on the personal spiritual development of pupils and their SMSC development through RE and collective worship. In addition, as 'an outward looking school', the school works with and supports a number of schools locally through the St Mark's Teaching Alliance and the Wealden Education Improvement Partnership and this has involved a significant number of staff. The previous priest in charge had a real presence on the governing body. The time and the commitment that he gave, including to the leadership of collective worship and supporting RE at the school over 12 years is very evident and particularly significant given that this was undertaken in a non-stipendiary capacity. The transition to the new minister has been seamless and he has already contributed to the planning of collective worship, as well as started to consider future developments. This demonstrates the strong capacity for the school's character as a church school to be sustained in the future.

SIAMS report September 2017 High Hurstwood Church of England Primary School, High Hurstwood, TN22 4AD