

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Etchingham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	
Parsonage Croft, High Street, Etchingham, East Sussex. TN19 7BY	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Chichester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	East Sussex
Date of inspection	30 November 2017
Date of last inspection	27 March 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 114502
Headteacher	Margaret Williams
Inspector's name and number	Richard Dyer 513

School context

Etchingham CE Primary School is a small rural primary school with 106 pupils from Etchingham and surrounding villages. Pupils are from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, predominantly white British with English their first language. The school has identified a significant percentage of children as 'vulnerable'. The headteacher has been in post eight years. In 2015 the school moved to new premises on a new housing development in the village. The local pre-school and community facilities are adjacent. In 2016 the school formally federated with another local small primary school. The two schools share the same headteacher and governing body.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Etchingham CE Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- The school has a strong and distinctive child-centred Christian ethos and clear Christian values which impact deeply and positively on the school's outstanding provision and excellent outcomes for the pupils.
- The strong Christian vision and highly effective leadership of the headteacher firmly supported by staff and governors, solidly underpins the school's Christian distinctiveness.
- The outstanding relationships within the school and pupils' exemplary behaviour clearly linked to Christian teaching.

Areas to improve

- Develop opportunities for spirituality beyond the classroom by creating areas for prayer and reflection within the school grounds.
- Develop teacher skills and church school middle leadership by accessing the diocese RE "Understanding Christianity" training and implementing the resource across the school.

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

Etchingham CE Primary School has a very strong Christian character and ethos based on the belief that all pupils are 'valued and precious in God's sight' and 'made in the image of God'. This is strongly supported by embedded Christian values, with clear biblical links centred on the stories and teachings of Jesus. Impressive displays around the school celebrate the school's Christian character. Examples include a mosaic reflecting Christian symbolism such as the rainbow and doves, and a "Butterfly Cross" celebrating Jesus' resurrection. The school's Christian ethos and values are shared and modelled by all members of the school community, who confidently articulate them and their impact on the school's daily life. Pupils clearly talk about the link between the school's values and biblical teaching and how the teachings of Jesus are the basis for how they live their lives. For example, showing tolerance and respect for each other and forgiveness after wrongdoing. Parents talk very positively about the impact of the school values on the pupils' well-being and achievements in school and at home.

The school's child centred ethos and Christian values are central to everything about the school underpinning curriculum provision and the high quality of care and relationships across the school community. The creative curriculum is carefully adapted and personalised to meet the strengths and needs of individual pupils. This includes providing imaginative and engaging targeted learning support for pupils, especially those identified by the school as 'vulnerable'. Consequently, learning is exciting and relevant resulting in 'vulnerable' pupils gaining increased confidence and self-esteem as they move through the school. All pupils make progress significantly above national outcomes from their relative starting points. Relationships among all members of the school community are outstanding. Staff know the pupils very well and make excellent provision for their pastoral needs and well-being. For example, providing personalised dialogue cards for a child with communication difficulties. Pupils describe feeling safe, loved and cared for and this is demonstrated by the confidence some felt in disclosing their autism publicly knowing their 'difference' would be respected and embraced by the rest of the school community. A clear behaviour policy puts the school's Christian values into practice. Forgiveness, for example, is integral to school life when something goes wrong. Behaviour is exemplary and attendance extremely high.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) is threaded through all aspects of school life; the creative curriculum, RE, collective worship and imaginative enrichment experiences. A culture of pupil responsibilities including the School Council, a pupil 'Buddy' system and a 'Window on the World' display, which is organised by pupils and reflects current affairs, are examples. Pupils use the display to inform their prayers, reflection and local, national and international charitable activities. Recently the school community supported an earthquake appeal and raised funds for a football strip for an overseas school. A rich programme of extra-curricular activities further enhances SMSC development. There are strong links with the partner federation school and other local school networks and a close and special relationship with the local church, community and a school in Malawi. As a result of this strong focus on SMSC development pupils have a real understanding of the wider world and their place in it.

RE contributes significantly to the school's Christian character and pupils SMSC development. Imaginative use of interactive resources and strong links with a school in Malawi promote pupils understanding and respect for diverse faiths and cultures. RE is delivered as 'RE days' rather than weekly providing longer opportunities for spiritual and creative experiences and is enhanced by visitors from, for example, the 'Walk Through the Bible' ministries. Pupils very much enjoy RE and find it relevant to their lives. Their RE learning challenges them to understand and respect all world faiths because "it is important we don't offend someone on purpose or accidentally".

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is integral to the daily life of the school and seen as an important part of the school day by the school community. It strongly promotes the school's Christian ethos and values and is clearly linked to the Bible and the teachings of Jesus. Pupils understand and can articulate the central position of Jesus in the Christian faith. Worship is carefully planned around biblical material which explores the school's values and celebrates pupils demonstrating these values, such as acts of kindness and thoughtfulness. Key cycles in the church year are observed and Anglican festivals such as Harvest and Christmas are celebrated, often in the local church. These are well supported by the parents who appreciate the opportunity to do so.

A variety of people lead worship including pupils, staff, clergy and visitors from Christian organisations. Pupils play an important part in leading worship such as holding the candle, leading the opening and closing responses and saying prayers. Worship is conducted in a dignified and respectful way and the key elements of Christian worship are included along with Christian symbolism, such as the cross and seasonally coloured cloths. Worship is imaginatively

conducted using various media and resources making it relevant and engaging. Pupils talk positively about worship and understand how the teachings of Jesus and Bible stories relate to the school's values and how they impact positively on their own lives. For example, how the story of 'The Good Samaritan' promotes compassion and tolerance and how they demonstrate these in their relationships with each other. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of the Trinity which is imaginatively displayed and explained in worship and RE.

Prayer and reflection are an important and integral part of worship and school life. Prayers are said collectively and individually in worship and prayers written by pupils are said from a 'Grace Book' at lunchtime. Imaginative use of the new premises has created effective areas for prayer and reflection in each classroom able to be seen and shared with the rest of the school through windows into the corridor. Prayer and reflection opportunities extend into other public areas inside the building but areas within the grounds need development. Prayer opportunities are enhanced during the year by creating prayer spaces with themes linked to collective worship and RE. These are extremely popular with the pupils as "great places to quietly reflect and think about God". The school community appreciates the opportunities for prayer and talk passionately about its impact on them in times of personal crisis and community tragedy. For example, parents describe how the school's 'prayer habit' continues at home, how prayer in school gave support to a family with a sick child and enabled children to come to terms with a national terrorist incident and a major tragedy in the village.

Monitoring and evaluation of worship has been significantly developed and embedded since the previous inspection. Pupils are central to this and the pupils' 'Barnabas Group' is a significant contributor to various developments including greater pupil involvement in the planning, delivery and evaluation of worship.

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

The headteacher has a strong, clear child centred vision rooted in biblical teaching and Christian values. This clear vision is central to the life of the school and informs its creative curriculum, high quality pastoral provision and priorities for school development. Staff and governors strongly support the vision and values and clearly articulate their significance on the daily life of the school. The impact is clearly seen in pupils' positive achievements and well-being, exemplary behaviour and relationships, and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

School self-evaluation has become securely embedded since the last inspection and resulted in change and improvement. Parent views are actively sought and welcomed and excellent pupil voice opportunities are provided through the Barnabas group, pupil feedback forms and the school council. Pupil views have had a demonstrable impact, for example RE is now delivered as RE days. This has raised the profile of RE across the school so that it is now seen as something special by the school community. Governors make regular monitoring visits. These have a specific focus and challenging questions to explore. As a result, governors clearly know the school well and both challenge and support the headteacher. These robust evaluations ensure school leadership has a very good understanding of school's performance, church school distinctiveness and its strengths and areas for development.

The strong culture of self-evaluation underpins the school's drive to improve its effectiveness. Self-evaluations lead directly into clear and robust action planning. This starts with improvements suggested by the school council and illustrates the centrality of pupils in everything the school does. There are also clear action plans for developing the school's Christian distinctiveness and governor effectiveness. Close links exist with the partner federation school and other local schools. Pupils come together for sporting and learning activities and staff share expertise, good practice and professional development. The school has links with the diocese but these could be strengthened by accessing diocesan 'Understanding Christianity' training in order to fulfil the school's plans for RE and strengthen its culture of preparing staff for future church school leadership.

There is a close and special relationship with the local church and community strongly based on the school's Christian ethos and values with clear mutual benefits. For example, the adjacent playgroup join the school children daily at lunchtime, community groups using the adjacent village hall are joined by the children for various activities, and the school joined the church and village community in prayer and reflection for mutual emotional and spiritual support at a time of village tragedy. There is also a close relationship with a school in Malawi used very effectively to develop pupils' understanding of cultural diversity and provide charitable opportunities to support the school.

Arrangements for RE and worship meet statutory requirements and both areas are very well led and managed.