

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Battle and Langton Church of England Primary School

Market Road, Battle, East Sussex. TN33 0HQ

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Chichester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	East Sussex
Date of inspection	12 October 2017
Date of last inspection	5 March 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled. 114489.
Headteacher	Simon Hughes
Inspector's name and number	Kelly Dillon (886)

School context

Battle and Langton Church of England Primary School is a larger than average, two form entry school in the centre of Battle, East Sussex. There are approximately 470 pupils on roll. 60% of pupils live in or near Battle with the remainder coming from Hastings and St. Leonards. Pupils are mostly from a White British heritage. Pupil premium is just below the national average but has risen significantly over the last five years. Numbers of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is in line with national figures. However, the number of pupils in the school with statements of SEND or Education, Health and Care plans is higher than average. The school has been very stable in its staff and leadership over the past five years. Battle and Langton retained its 'Good' OfSTED grading under the latest framework in November 2015.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Battle and Langton as a Church of England school are good

- The highly inclusive nature of the school, based on core Christian values, creates a safe and nurturing environment where all God's children flourish.
- The high standard of behaviour and positive relationships are all underpinned by the distinctive Christian character of the school.
- High quality collective worship engages and inspires pupils and uplifts other members of the school community.
- Good school leadership ensures that core Christian values permeate all aspects of school life.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that all leaders consistently and explicitly promote a vision rooted in the Christian foundations of the school and embed the self-evaluation process of the school, as a church school, at all levels, including governors.
- Enhance the quality of experience for pupils to explore spirituality in greater depth by identifying opportunities across the curriculum.
- Develop pupils appreciation of prayer so that they have a better understanding of how it can contribute to their personal spiritual development.

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

At Battle and Langton six core Christian values are deeply embedded and strongly influence all aspects of school life. All members of the school community talk positively about the values and the significant impact that they have throughout the school. As one staff member noted, 'the values are at the heart of all that we do.' Pupils develop a strong sense of morality based upon these values and their biblical teaching. The behaviour of pupils is of the highest standard. Children are very keen to come to school and are highly motivated and engaged by all that it offers.

Relationships throughout the whole school community are especially good. It is a school where everyone works together for the best of every child. In fact, a key strength at Battle and Langton is the highly inclusive nature of the school, firmly driven by its Christian distinctiveness. Through its mission the school ensures that all of God's children are truly valued. The school is highly regarded by the local authority in the way in which it meets the needs of all pupils. A beacon school in providing for pupils with social and emotional needs, here all children flourish. The Christian character of the school directly impacts upon individual progress through the thorough investigation and support for every child's individual needs and emotions. School staff work with the whole child, creating an inner self-belief, which in turn impacts upon academic achievement and personal development. This approach is highlighted through termly pupil progress meetings where the personal well-being of pupils is discussed as well as their academic progress. Academic achievement is measured by progress and the school is quick to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and deals with them very effectively. At the school all achievements are celebrated. Children evolve into mature and confident pupils with an evident love for learning and a deep respect for all.

Pupils express their spirituality, emotions and responses to the world in a variety of ways; music, drama and art. They are beginning to develop a personal spirituality and the ability to express these thoughts with confidence. However, opportunities for children to explore spirituality across the curriculum are not yet fully developed.

The school promotes respect for diverse communities through the celebration of a range of festivals, and by learning about Christianity as a world faith, especially in Sierra Leone. Pupils have an excellent knowledge of faiths from around the world and are particularly confident in sharing this knowledge. The teaching of religious education (RE) at Battle and Langton enhances the Christian character of the school. Pupils are excited by RE which is reflected in the standards of their work.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

High quality collective worship engages all members of the school community who respond to them with enthusiasm. It is fun, inspiring and memorable, positively influencing relationships across every aspect of the school.

Worship is carefully planned, giving all an experience of biblical teachings. Consequently, learners gain a deep understanding of the Bible and are able to relate this to the school's core values and to their own lives. Over the course of each term collective worship is led by a range of leaders including members of staff, visiting speakers and local clergy. Different approaches by a range of leaders are beginning to impact positively upon pupils' knowledge of the Holy Trinity. Whilst pupils are secure in their knowledge of God as Father and Son, not all pupils have a clear understanding of God as the Holy Spirit.

Themes from worship are followed up in the classroom and key stage setting. This means that each age group acquires knowledge of each theme at an appropriate level. This in turn helps pupils remember the strong Christian message and become especially confident in sharing how this theological knowledge informs their own choices. One child reflecting upon the story of Saul stated, 'Anyone can change. Always give other people another chance even if they have done something wrong.'

Prayer is an important part of school life. Pupils recognise the importance of prayer and talk about the purpose of prayer and reflection. Although prayer is a regular part of the life of the school, children have yet to appreciate its value as part of a spiritual journey. The Christian life of the school is especially celebrated through song. All pupils sing hymns with passion, whole-heartedly contributing towards an uplifting experience. One child identified the spiritual element of singing stating that it 'brought them together, as one'.

Pupils report that they enjoy worship and some formal feedback is beginning to be gathered from members of the school community. However, current systems for the monitoring and evaluating of collective worship are not robust.

Festivals in the Christian year are celebrated with services at St. Mary's Church in Battle, a highlight for many within the local community. Services at the church provide pupils with opportunities for planning and leading worship. However, the potential for wider opportunities of pupil leadership throughout daily acts of worship have not yet been fully realised.

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

Over the last five years school leaders at Battle and Langton have been particularly successful in embedding the core Christian values into the life of the school. In this caring and nurturing Christian environment all are given the opportunity to excel and flourish. School staff dedicate much time in developing the whole child, identifying and removing any barriers to learning. The dedication to the children at Battle and Langton is the primary way in which the Christian vision of the school is put into practice. All pupils' strengths are celebrated and built upon. Particularly notable, despite the large number of pupils, is the depth to which the headteacher knows each and every child. Partnerships with the wider school community are especially successful. The school's work with families is particularly notable, all stakeholders working together to ensure the very best for all of God's children. From the very beginning the school is working with families to give children the best start in life. For example reaching out into the community through their positive parenting classes. The school's vision also underpins the inclusive nature of the school. 'Love, Inspire, Achieve,' based upon the values and their biblical foundations support the work of all stakeholders. However, the extent to which leaders consistently and explicitly promote this Christian vision to all aspects of school life is less strong.

In this caring and nurturing Christian environment all are given the opportunity to excel and flourish. The school places a high priority in investing in a range of opportunities for all staff to develop their professionalism and career development.

The school has very close links with St. Mary's Church through the dean of Battle and with the Diocese of Chichester. The dean is very involved in school life and leads worship weekly.

The school is also central to town life and the surrounding community supporting many local festivities and events. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and are proud of its reputation within the local area.

School leaders have a good understanding of the school's performance based on the school's self-evaluation strategies. The school is never complacent, always seeking ways to be even better. The interest of every child is at the heart of any plan. Although evaluation as a church school is not yet integral to overall school improvement planning, and the potential to underpin school improvements therefore not fully developed, overall self-evaluation as a church school is accurate.

Religious education and collective worship hold a central place in the curriculum and statutory requirements regarding their needs are met. The leadership of religious education is given a high priority and has been particularly successful in improving the standard of teaching and learning of RE across the school.

SIAMS report October 2017. Battle and Langton CE Primary School. TN33 0HQ.