

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Catsfield Church of England Primary School

Church Road Catsfield Battle TN33 9DP

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Diocese

Chichester

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Good

Local authority

East Sussex

Date of inspection

17 October 2017

Date of last inspection

22 February 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

Voluntary Controlled 114494

Headteacher

Caroline Garland

Inspector's name and number

Susan Thompson 714

School context

Catsfield Church of England Primary School is a voluntary controlled school of 108 pupils. The majority of pupils are from a White British background. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs or in receipt of pupil premium is low. A new headteacher took up post in September 2017. The OFSTED inspection in October 2013 rated the school outstanding; following this the school became a national support school and has worked to support the development of other schools locally and nationally.

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

- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision is highly effective.
- A heart of service touches all parts of the school life. This is exemplified through charity works, support for other schools and the strong links with the local village community.
- Collective worship is very well planned and pupils are active participants in facilitating and evaluating the impact of collective worship.
- Collective worship is seen positively by all members of the school community and impacts on their daily lives.
- Church school developments are central to the whole school development plan and the monitoring cycle undertaken by leaders.
- The pastoral support for all members of the community, based on Christian values, is strong.

Areas to improve

- Develop stakeholders' confidence in explicitly talking about the biblical teachings that underpin the school values and ensure these links are overt in school policies.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to plan and lead further aspects of collective worship more frequently in order to further deepen the pupils' experience of worship.

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

The school vision is 'Achieve Excellence – Inspire Dreams'. This is supported by Christian values of trust, thankfulness, hope, friendship and forgiveness which were selected by a range of members in the school community a year ago. Governors, pupils and parents remark on the special atmosphere and close community feel of the school embracing the Christian character and values of the school. The school self-evaluation cites that the fruit of the spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness and self-control) underpins the work of the school. Pupils have a developed sense of social responsibility leading to a range of fund raising activities. This helps other people 'achieve their dreams' as one pupil said, thus linking the school vision statement to the actions taken. They link Jesus' teaching in John 3:16 'For God so loved the world...' to being thankful to God for what they have. The school's approach to attendance is strongly influenced by the desire to be inclusive, support all families and to give hope. Relationships have been built with those who have found attendance difficult; this approach has had a positive impact. Attainment across all phases and pupil groups is in line or above national expectations for pupils at the expected standard, with all groups of pupils supported to achieve. This is underpinned by the school vision which encourages aspiration. One pupil said 'talents make you unique but if you help each other to achieve their dreams you will achieve your dreams'. Another stated, 'no matter what, God will always be with you'. The behaviour of pupils, seen during the inspection, was exemplary; pupils are supported through the excellent role models of their peers, support from peer mediators and a strong buddy system. One said, 'the school has a special, spiritual quality'. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) of the pupils is evident throughout. They are given opportunities to consider their worries through the use of worry boxes in the classrooms. A display in the infant classroom about 'My worries', linked to a book at the start of the term. This gave pupils an opportunity to reflect and express their concerns. Other displays in the school support positive self-esteem such as, 'Marvellous Me' and 'My Amazing Brain'. A display in the upper juniors of a stained-glass window stimulates questioning and encourages links between maths, art and wonder. The pupils value the links with the village. These links give opportunities to bring joy to others through such activities as carol singing or the recent delivery of harvest boxes. Members of the school community talk from personal experience about different cultures and faiths to enhance the pupils' understanding of diversity. Pupils say, 'it's OK to be different'. Religious education (RE) makes a strong contribution to SMSC and supports the pupils' developing knowledge of the Bible. Each lesson is linked to a key verse or Bible teaching. In upper juniors, the pupils made links between learning about Moses and the Ten Commandments and the 9 rules in Hinduism. They were able to discuss the similarities between the values in both faiths. In doing so they showed respect for those of other faiths. RE learning is valued by the pupils, Year 5 said they 'enjoy RE' and the infant pupils were excited to share the memory verse they had learnt about David and Goliath. RE is not studied in isolation but supports and is supported by other elements of the curriculum through carefully planned links. The developing use of debate in RE and across the curriculum is enhancing the pupils' respect for others views and equipping them to discuss world issues with compassion and sensitivity. For instance, child workforce in plantations in Ghana had been debated. Christian values understanding is developed through the curriculum. For example, in PSHE a link was made to fighting for what is right and the story of David and Goliath.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is very well planned and reflects the key festivals in the church year. Understanding of diversity within the Christian faith is supported by a range of staff members and visitors leading collective worship. Pupils are aware of Christianity as a global faith and are developing an understanding of how Christian festivals around the world are celebrated. For example, harvest celebrations from around the world were considered during the recent harvest service. The physical environment shares features with Anglican practice with a cross, candle and Bible placed on the focal table. Pupils participate in a range of Anglican traditions, including saying a greeting and dismissal, regular Bible readings, prayers and singing. They recognise that these are aspects of worship shared with the church. On the day of the inspection, pupils took part in collective worship with enthusiasm and were keen to join in thinking about the Lord's Prayer. One child made a link between God providing food for the Israelites in the desert and the line 'give us today our daily bread'. As everyone leaves the hall they are invited to write down how the collective worship would make an impact on their life. A response written after the observed collective worship reflected on being thankful to God for the food they have to eat. This is part of the regular routines. Pupils are active participants in facilitating collective worship. Collective worship takes place regularly in church; after church services pupils write a reflection on the service. Following pupil evaluations in January more opportunities for pupils to be involved in acting during collective worship have been provided. This has improved the pupils' engagement in collective worship and understanding of the stories shared. For example, in talking about the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, they could talk about the miracle of Jesus' provision. Pupils are clear on the meaning of the Trinity as a belief in one God with three parts; they explained this in terms of the items on the focal table. The Bible representing God, the cross for Jesus and the candle representing the Holy Spirit. They have spontaneously started to sign the cross at the end of collective worship following the vicar's lead over the last year. Pupils say this action

demonstrates the three parts of the Trinity. Prayer gems can be collected after collective worship by anyone as an aid to prayer or reflection. They are then put in the class reflection areas. One pupil said 'I took a prayer gem to help me overcome my fears'. Pupils understand that prayer is talking to God. Reflection areas around the school are very well presented; children value the opportunity to be quiet in the reflection garden or to look at the reflection area in their classroom saying 'it helps me calm down'. Prayer space events take place twice a year, supported by volunteers. These events have encouraged pupils to respond creatively to prayer and reflection. Reflection activities in the hall are modelled on prayer spaces and are actively used by pupils to support their spiritual development. The current prayer tree is used to give thanks; examples written include thanksgiving for food and for families. This reflects the school's value of thankfulness. There is a hand for pupils to write their name on so they can think about their value to God. Last year's prayer spaces event inspired one pupil to develop a prayer space in their bedroom and another pupil independently set up a prayer space in school. The school have participated in a University of York research project about prayer spaces to develop practice. There are many opportunities to pray in the school. Pupils know that these opportunities give time to talk to God or to be quiet and think if they don't want to pray. These times are valued by staff, 'it gives me time to think and be calm, prayer supports my personal wellbeing.'

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

The school vision is firmly rooted in the Bible, reflecting the belief that every individual is special, precious and loved by God. This leads to high aspirations for all and a focus on the development of the whole child. Christian values are clearly and explicitly communicated. Staff identify the positive impact they have on relationships in school and parents say that these values develop their children's broader development. Since the last inspection a number of improvements have resulted from a cycle of regular monitoring and evaluation of church school distinctiveness led by a working group of governors. The new headteacher is bringing even greater precision to the monitoring by involving staff more fully in the process of improvement. This has resulted in increasing reflection opportunities for pupils and development of their understanding of what the stories of Jesus mean in their lives through, for example, a greater focus on prayer and more explicit links between collective worship themes, learning opportunities and reflection areas in classrooms. Governing board minutes show that church school distinctiveness is regularly reported on, discussed and prioritised through resources. RE is a beacon subject in the school and the committed subject leader works regularly alongside the governors' SIAMS committee to support developments. Christian values have underpinned learning in RE lessons since 2015. More recently the implementation of the Understanding Christianity materials has enabled all staff and pupils to develop a greater understanding of Christian concepts. A wider impact of this has already been observed by the RE subject leader, who has seen an increased focus on enquiry based learning across the curriculum. Feedback from pupils and parents is regularly sought and considered in developments. For example, pupils said that there was a lack of progression in their learning about key Christian festivals, so this was addressed through the 'Awesome Art' project which gave the opportunity for deeper learning and resulted in high quality work. Recruitment processes, including that of the headteacher, have an appropriate focus on the responsibilities of working in a church school. Staff feel very well supported personally and professionally and benefit from training to equip them to work and lead in a Christian environment, for example in the creative delivery of RE and collective worship. There is effective collaboration with the local cluster of church schools, including shared planning for collective worship. Good practice in the school is acknowledged at diocesan level, with opportunities for those on diocesan training courses to visit the school as an exemplar. The school's connection with the church family is reinforced by regular contact with the vicar, who is fully involved with school life and knows many families by name. Local partnerships are strong and serve to exemplify the school's Christian values, especially friendship and hope, in action. Welcoming the wider community to school events, such as carol singing and the MacMillan coffee morning, and contributing to the parish magazine ensures that the school maintains a high profile. Opportunities to learn from people within the community have been facilitated to ensure the pupils develop an understanding of different world faiths and engage with a range of cultures. Parents feel valued. They recognise the school's desire to work in partnership with them and say that their feedback, for example on the way world faiths are covered in RE, is sought and acted upon.

The school meets the requirements for collective worship and religious education.

SIAMS report October 2017 Catsfield Church of England Primary School TN33 9DP