

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Margaret's Church of England Primary School

St Margaret's Church of England Primary School, Arundel Road, Littlehampton, BN16 4LP

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Chichester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	West Sussex
Date of inspection	20 March 2018
Date of last inspection	3-4 October 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 126018
Headteacher	Mike Jee
Inspector's name and number	Jan Meyer 921

School context

This larger than average-sized primary school serves the area in and around the parish of St Margaret's church. It has a strong and mutually beneficial relationship with the church. The headteacher joined the school in September 2017. The percentage of pupils for whom the school receives extra funding due to social disadvantage, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are both well below the national average. The majority of pupils are White British. In national tests the school is close to national averages and meets the government's floor standards.

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

- The Christian character at St Margaret's Church of England Primary School is very effectively promoted and makes a strong impact on the personal development of pupils.
- Collective worship and RE are seen positively by members of the school community and have an impact on the way pupils live their lives.
- The expertise of the religious education (RE) leadership team is driving forward improvements in the RE curriculum.
- The Christian ethos of the school contributes to pupils behaving well and the good relationships between all members of the school community.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) provision is very effective.

Areas to improve

- Develop an explicit Christian vision for the school and revisit the Christian values so that governors and senior leaders evaluate the impact that the school's distinctively Christian vision and values have on the lives of learners.
- Establish a monitoring cycle so that senior leaders and governors evaluate the impact of collective worship and RE on the whole school community.
- Embed 'Understanding Christianity' into the RE curriculum and refine the use of the newly developed assessment system across the school.

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

St Margaret's core Christian values are clearly linked with Christian teaching and biblical references. These values are known and articulated by all members of the school community. The values, along with the motto, 'Learning together side by side, growing together with Jesus as our guide', underpin the Christian character of the school and guide pupils' lives and achievements. However, not all leaders are able to articulate how the school's Christian character impacts on the lives of learners. The termly value is the focus for weekly worship and the classroom reflection areas. This supports the children to know and understand the value well. One aim in the school's spiritual development policy is 'to admit children to our school in a Christian atmosphere where Christian values are paramount and evident'. Those Christian values are clearly reflected in the supportive relationships within the school and are demonstrated in the good behaviour of the pupils. The school's long established mission statement is not as well known or articulated by all members of the school community and the school plan to revisit this shortly at a whole school 'visioning day'. The school's approach to attendance is strongly influenced by the desire to be inclusive and support all families and this approach has had a very positive impact. Attainment across all phases and pupil groups is in line or close to national expectations for pupils at the expected standard, with all groups of pupils supported to achieve. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) provision is very effective with the children being given a wide range of experiences and opportunities such as attending Christian Union which is run twice a week by the youth worker from St Margaret's church. There are very strong links with St Margaret's church with termly services at the church, when space allows, and regular contact with the clergy team who come into school weekly to lead worship. The termly church services held in the parish church allow learners to become familiar with church liturgy and practices. The youth worker from St Margaret's church attends the school's residential trips and leads a quiet reflection time at the end of each day. The rector of St Margaret's described the relationship between the church and the school as "a partnership where we work together". The worship programme and RE also contribute well to pupils' SMSC development. RE, worship and other planned activities successfully provide a range of opportunities for pupils to explore the importance of religious belief and practice in the world today. Recent training on Understanding Christianity undertaken by all teachers has strengthened their knowledge and understanding of Christianity, and as a result, RE supports the school's Christian foundation extremely well. The RE syllabus provides a good balance between teaching that focuses on Christianity and that which addresses other world faiths such as Judaism, Hinduism and Islam. Pupils say that they enjoy learning about other religions and are proud of the work that they have undertaken on respecting the beliefs of others. Learners are able to discuss the similarities between Christianity and other faiths. The school environment, the quotes from the bible displayed around the school, the displays on the walls and the reflection areas in the classrooms support and demonstrates the school's Christian character extremely well.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is systematically planned around the school's Christian values, British values and current affairs, which are taken from the children's newspaper First News. All worship has a theological basis and includes quotes from the Bible. The weekly current affairs worship ends with the question 'what does God think about this?' and then a prayer. Since September 2017 all staff have been involved in leading aspects of worship. Leaders from St Margaret's and the local Baptist church regularly lead collective worship, which develops pupils' ecumenical understanding of Christian tradition. 'The Journeyman' a Christian story teller and mime artist leads worship when he visits the school. The local clergy use school plans to guide their themes when delivering worship. Major Christian Festivals are celebrated in St Margaret's church and in school, which has a larger space, and enables more parents to attend. Pupils play an active role in these services, which are very well supported and enjoyed by parents. Pupils also become familiar with the cycle of the church year through 'Godly Play'. Pupils are familiar with aspects of traditional Anglican worship practices such as opening and closing worship with a call and response 'Peace be with you' 'and also with you' and a lit candle representing Jesus as the light of the world. The physical environment shares features with Anglican practice with a cross and candle placed on the focal table. Through worship and RE pupils have developed an age-appropriate knowledge of the life and the teaching of Jesus, his importance to Christians and of the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They make links between biblical teaching and the school's Christian values and consider how these might relate to their own actions. One Year 4 pupil said, worship 'makes me clearer about God and Jesus'. Pupils say that they enjoy collective worship, particularly the 'singing'. Parents say that the pupils very often sing the songs from worship at home. Pupils enjoy the question at the end of some worships, one Year 5 pupil stated, 'the question gives me something to think about over the weekend and discuss with my parents at home'. Monitoring the impact and consistency of the quality of worship is undertaken by governors, pupils, senior leaders and the Faith and Wonder team. Feedback from pupils has led to particular songs being taught and more opportunities for pupils to read

from the Bible and lead prayers, however, there is not a coherent whole school evaluation system in place that gives leaders a secure knowledge and understanding of the impact that worship has on all members of the school community. The school hold a prayer week every two years which is planned and created with support from the clergy and congregation of St Margaret's. The school offers opportunities for prayer during the school day, grace before lunch and end-of-day prayers and provides reflection areas for prayer. Reflection areas in each classroom are refreshed half termly and themed alongside the Christian value being focussed on at that time. These areas are consistent across the school, the resources for them are provided by the Faith and Wonder leaders and the areas are changed by the teachers with support from the Faith and Wonder team. They are often used by the children for quiet moments of reflection and have supported pupils in their understanding of the nature of prayer and reflection.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious Education is a core subject in the school and given a high profile. The RE curriculum which was written by the school received the Bishop's commendation in 2012. Since then it has continued to evolve and improve, 'big questions' have been embedded into each unit of work which give pupils deeper thinking challenges. All staff have received training in 'Godly Play' and each unit of work includes a Godly Play lesson. More recently, Understanding Christianity was integrated into the curriculum, giving teachers improved knowledge and better skills and resources for the teaching of Christianity. The St Margaret's curriculum encourages pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics. A Year2 pupil stated, 'it helps me to think of an answer that is not so obvious'. Pupils make good progress across each key stage and are keen to show the work in their RE books. The school proactively equips pupils to be global citizens through links with Sierra Leone and schools in Africa, particularly Makeni School and pupils have been learning about and raising funds for the refugee crisis through supporting UNICEF. As a result pupils are keen to learn about, and speak with respect for, other faiths and religions. The RE subject leaders worked with the local deanery group to design a rigorous assessment system, which the school has recently introduced. Although the school has always assessed progress in RE, the new assessment system will more specifically inform planning in order to improve teaching and learning. The Faith and Wonder leadership team have a systematic timetable of monitoring to ensure that the school's standards are maintained and improved.

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

The school has a strong Christian character, which is firmly rooted in the Bible, reflecting the belief that 'Jesus is at the centre of our lives'. Staff identify the positive impact this has on relationships in school and parents say that the values enhance their children's broader development. One parent stated, 'this school helps them to see the world through the eyes of a Christian'. When appointing the new headteacher for September 2017 governors were determined to have a headteacher who would support and deepen the Christian ethos even further. Since the previous inspection, a number of improvements have resulted from a cycle of regular monitoring 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. Leaders are determined that pupils and staff will continue to flourish. The 'Understanding Christianity' training has supported leaders in developing the staff. The Faith and Wonder leadership team's monitoring shows that this has enabled all staff and pupils to develop a greater understanding of Christian concepts. All staff attend collective worship giving them opportunities to develop the key messages outside of worship. Governors and leaders undertake regular monitoring. However, it is not clear how all aspects of monitoring are drawn together by governors and leaders to evaluate the impact of the Christian vision. The recently appointed headteacher has a whole staff, visioning day planned to review the mission statement and values so that the vision and values are explicit, thereby enabling monitoring to be clearly focused on the impact of the Christian distinctiveness of the school on all members of the school community. Religious education is led by a strong team of dedicated people which ensures that the leadership of RE is sustainable and not reliant on one person. Religious education and collective worship are led well which leads to continually improving practice in both areas. Religious education and worship are very well resourced and supported and meet the National Society's Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education. The school has developed good partnership links. The school works effectively with parents to help them support their children's academic learning and personal development. Regular use is made of diocesan and deanery support and training. A strong and mutually supportive partnership between the school and the church exists, with regular visits from the vicar and the children and families' support worker as well as visits to the church. School leaders and clergy enjoy a 'fruitful partnership'. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.