

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Giles Church of England Aided Primary School	
Church Lane, Horsted Keynes, West Sussex, RH17 7AY	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Chichester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	West Sussex
Date of inspection	14 June 2018
Date of last inspection	13 March 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Aided 126057
Headteacher	Hilary Douch
Inspector's name and number	Richard Dyer 513

School context

St Giles CE Aided Primary School is a small rural primary school located adjacent to the parish church with which it has close links. It has 102 pupils from the local community and surrounding areas taught in four classes. The majority of pupils are white British. There are an average number of pupils with special educational needs and the number entitled to Pupil Premium funding is very small. The head teacher has been in post since January 2017. Since her appointment the school has undergone significant changes including a high number of changes of staff and governors.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Giles CE Aided Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

- The headteacher's strong leadership, based on a clear Christian vision for the school, solidly underpins the school's Christian character.
- The school's reaffirmation of its Christian vision and values which are central to all aspects of school life and impact positively on the school's distinctive Christian character.
- The school's strong commitment to improving its effectiveness and distinctiveness as a church school through a journey of whole school development based on its Christian vision and values.

Areas to improve

- Strengthen the school's distinctive Christian character by embedding the school's vision and values in all aspects of the life of the school to promote consistently improving positive outcomes for pupils
- Use the appointment of the new RE co-ordinator as an opportunity to review and develop the RE action plan in order to consolidate and embed good quality RE teaching, learning and assessment across the school.
- Promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development by establishing links with other communities in the wider world.

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

St Giles CE Primary School has a distinctive Christian character and a caring, nurturing ethos. This is based on long standing Christian vision statements and four Christian values linked to the teachings of Jesus Christ and Biblical references. Since the appointment of the new headteacher the school has engaged with the whole school community to reaffirm its Christian vision and values and overhauled the school's policies and practices to make them central to the life of the school. The school vision and values now firmly underpin curriculum provision and teaching and learning. An enquiry based curriculum has been introduced to nurture pupils' curiosity, confidence and creativity, and is carefully structured to meet the needs of the pupils. Pupil attainment is moving positively towards national expectations. Pupils, including those with educational needs, are making good progress from their relative starting points. The vision and values also underpin the high quality of care and excellent relationships among all members of the school community. Pupils demonstrate very good behaviour. They clearly talk about the school's values and the teachings of Jesus being the basis for how they should live their lives. For example, they speak about the importance of showing care for each other and forgiveness after wrongdoing. Parents talk enthusiastically about the school ethos as a nurturing 'family' and praise the school for the way it enables pupils to flourish and grow. The school is now on a journey to strengthen and embed its vision across all aspects of school life in order to promote consistently improving positive outcomes for pupils in their learning and attainment. The school's Christian character and values positively contribute to the school's Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) provision. Opportunities for SMSC development are integrated in all aspects of school life and built into the design and delivery of the curriculum through a programme of educational visits and forest school experiences, extra-curricular activities and strong partnerships with the local church, community and local schools. SMSC is strongly promoted through pupil responsibilities, such as the Ethos Group and School Council, who contribute to the development of the school's Christian distinctiveness through pupil voice feedback. Religious education (RE) contributes to the school's Christian character and pupils' SMSC development including developing their awareness and understanding of cultural diversity by learning about other world religions. Further cultural experiences are limited to curriculum themed days such as India Day. Links with communities in the wider world are not yet established.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is an important part of daily school life and held in school and the adjacent church every Friday and key times in the church calendar. It is thoughtfully planned to link to the school's Christian values and Biblical texts and teachings which are made relevant to pupils' own lives. Worship is led by staff, clergy, and a community group in church on Friday. Pupils lead worship in church, termly class worship and are increasingly involved in daily school worship. Parents keenly attend the worship in church and the class led worship in school. Worship is distinctly Christian incorporating key elements of Anglican tradition such as lighting a candle. The Trinity is frequently referenced in worship and reinforced through RE and a termly Eucharist service in church. Pupils confidently articulate an age-appropriate understanding of the Trinity and the meaning of symbolism in worship. For example, that lighting a candle represents Jesus being the light of the world and what this means. Pupils are positive about worship and enjoy it. They confidently recall how the teachings of Jesus and Bible stories relate to the school's values and their impact on their lives. For example, how 'The Good Samaritan' promotes care and respect and how they show this.

Prayer and reflection are an integral part of worship and opportunities for further prayer and reflection have been extended beyond worship through regular forest school experiences and use of the Quiet Garden. There are well used prayer areas in the classrooms where pupils write and display their own prayers. The school has used the Diocese Year of Prayer to develop pupils' understanding of prayer; pupils speak confidently about the importance of prayer as a means of "communicating with God" and the different ways in which people can pray. Parents appreciate the prayer opportunities offered by the school and report how some children continue prayer at home, saying prayers at bedtime and leading family prayers at a pet's funeral.

Monitoring and evaluation of worship has been considerably strengthened and is regularly undertaken by the school leadership and governors. Pupil voice is strong and has resulted in greater pupil involvement in daily worship, such as lighting of the candle and leading prayers, as well as ideas for developing the Quiet Garden.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

Religious Education (RE) has a high profile within the school with 10% teaching time instead of the legal 5%. It is seen as a core subject and is being significantly developed. It is an integral part of the school development plan with its own detailed action plan to improve the quality of RE teaching and learning. To achieve these priorities, the school has adopted the 'Discovery RE' scheme, and its associated assessment system to track pupils' attainment and progress, in addition to the new 'Understanding Christianity' materials. These are delivered with increasing effectiveness through an enquiry based, cross curricular approach which link with the school's values, collective worship, and SMSC development. The quality of teaching and learning is much improved. In RE lessons observed, teachers displayed confidence in their teaching; most made links to the school's values and delivered the lessons in ways that motivated and engaged the learners. However, the pace of some lessons is an area for development. Pupils describe RE as more interesting and better than before and say how much they enjoy it. They confidently recall what they have learnt and display a good knowledge of the Bible and Christianity. Scrutiny of pupils' books and the new assessment data show pupil RE attainment to be improving and is in line with improved attainment in other core subjects. The developments in RE are clearly impacting positively but need consolidating and embedding to be fully effective. For example, the development of pupils' understanding of Christianity as a world faith and promoting active global citizenship. RE is regularly monitored and evaluated by the school leadership, governors and diocesan adviser and identifies where further development is needed, such as staff training.

The leadership of RE has been unsettled. The RE co-ordinator was originally the headteacher who initiated the RE developments. In January 2018 the role passed to another teacher who enthusiastically embraced the role. She has attended Diocesan training on Understanding Christianity and led staff training to strengthen the use of an enquiry approach to the teaching of RE. She soon leaves the school and a new RE co-ordinator with a Christian background, existing strong links with the school and an enthusiastic outlook in driving forward the development of RE has been appointed for September. This new appointment is an opportunity for the school to review the progress of its RE development and revise the RE action plan to consolidate and embed good quality RE teaching, learning and assessment across the school.

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

The school has a strong commitment to improving its effectiveness and distinctiveness as a church school based on its Christian vision and values. This was initiated by the headteacher who is leading the school on a journey of school improvement. She models strong leadership and a clear Christian vision, which is shared and supported by staff and governors, who can confidently articulate the impact on school daily life.

To achieve this vision there is a clear school development plan with specific sections on RE, collective worship and the school's distinctive Christian character. School development priorities for leadership and management have been significantly revised to improve governor effectiveness. This has given governors a much clearer understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses enabling them to support and challenge the headteacher. Monitoring and evaluation has been strengthened and there is now regular monitoring of RE and collective worship by the school leadership, governors and diocesan adviser. The school has close links with the diocese and local school networks and advantage is taken of staff and governor support and development opportunities. This has led to improved governor monitoring, additional support for the RE coordinator and the development of the school's Christian distinctiveness. The views of parents are actively sought through Ethos questionnaires and good pupil voice opportunities are provided through the School Council and Ethos Group.

The school has effective partnerships that all contribute effectively to school life, the promotion of its values and pupils' SMSC development. There are good links with the community and the adjacent parish church. Pupils join in with local events such as helping at the monthly village lunch, a team of parishioners regularly deliver worship to the pupils, and the rector leads worship and supports RE. There are close partnerships with the diocese and local networks of schools. These strengthen pupils' SMSC development through participation in the annual diocese Leavers Service and shared curricular, sporting and social activities.

Arrangements for RE and worship meet, and in some aspects exceed, statutory requirements.

SIAMS report June 2018 St Giles CE Aided Primary School, Church Lane, Horsted Keynes, West Sussex, RH17 7AY