

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

<b>Graffham Church of England Infant School</b>			
<b>Address</b>	Graffham Petworth West Sussex GU28 ONJ		
<b>Date of inspection</b>	16 January 2019	<b>Status of school</b>	VC Infant School Lavington Park Federation
<b>Diocese</b>	Chichester	<b>URN</b>	125831

<b>Overall Judgement</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Requires Improvement</b>
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?		
<b>Additional Judgement</b>		
<b>The impact of collective worship</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>

### School context

Graffham is an infant school with 54 pupils on roll. The school has a very low level of religious and cultural diversity and no pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages. The school has been part of a federation with Duncton CE Junior School since 2005. Graffham became a Church school in 2014. The current headteacher has been at the school for 11 years and is head of the federation.

### The school's Christian vision

'A small school filled with curious minds, big hearts and happy voices'

Within our Church school, we enable our children to develop a secure understanding of our Christian and learning values. The teaching of kindness is modelled and supported throughout all of our actions for children, their families and our community. We believe child centred learning provides a voice so children can follow their interests with curiosity and creativity.

### Key findings

- The Christian character of the school is shown through its ethos of nurture which results in a school community feeling that they are part of a family. Behaviour and relationships are warm and welcoming and create a positive, happy and secure environment.
- The school's inclusive, child centred curriculum recognises every child as unique.
- The school's vision is not explicitly Christian or rooted in biblical teaching. It does not, as a Christian vision, drive the school's improvement.
- Systems for self-evaluation have not focussed on evaluating and improving Graffham as a Church school.
- Collective worship is invitational, inclusive and is developing pupils' spirituality.

### Areas for development

- Review the school's vision to ensure that it is distinctively Christian, rooted in biblical teaching and drives the school's improvement. Ensure that it is fully understood and articulated by all members of the community.
- Improve the process of self-evaluation as a Church school so that formal evaluations include all aspects of the school's distinctiveness and gather robust evidence of the school's Christian foundation.
- Put in place systems for assessment in religious education (RE) which enable teachers to gauge progress and attainment.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

### Inspection findings

Graffham school effectively provides an inclusive environment where the needs of all pupils are met. It provides a high level of nurture and care to its school community through a strong 'spirit of Christianity' evident in its Christian ethos of kindness and love. The school's overarching Christian value is kindness and it is clear that this is impacting on relationships across the community. This value has been linked to some biblical teaching, the story of the good Samaritan and the feeding of the 5000, but opportunities for pupils to explore in more depth from a social, moral or spiritual standpoint have not been taken. This ethos of kindness and love underpins all areas of school life and is lived out daily by all stakeholders. However, the Christian ethos is currently not explicitly expressed through the school's vision, which is child centred but is not rooted in biblical teachings. Members of the school community are not able to confidently articulate the vision within a Christian context. School systems for self-evaluation have only recently started to focus on Graffham's effectiveness as a Church school. There is little evidence of impact of actions taken over time, because governors and leaders have not been strong in formalising its Christian distinctiveness. Governors' recent actions to improve the school's distinctiveness have included being creative in sourcing alternative funding streams to pay training for the headteacher on the implementation of the RE resource 'Understanding Christianity'. Governors' and leaders' aspirations for the future have led to the development of a Church school action plan effective from Spring Term 2019. Its contents are relevant and appropriate for improving Graffham's effectiveness as a Church school.

Leaders shape the curriculum with a passionate focus on 'the child at the midst of everything' and ensure that any strategies used to move the school forward are based in educational research. However, this has not been explicitly linked to Graffham as a Church school. Most pupils make good progress and this is related to the child centred curriculum. Achievement is at least in line with, and in some instances above, national averages.

Attendance is satisfactory. A strength of the school is its provision for those with additional learning or personal needs and those who are vulnerable, where progress is good from their starting points. The school has chosen to invest in Forest Schools, which is deeply embedded in the curriculum. It is used as an opportunity for pupils to discuss their own creativity and to appreciate the world God created. It provides effective spiritual development opportunities; pupils spoke about having the opportunity to 'pray when we are exploring'. The school has high aspirations for all its pupils. Both personal and academic achievements are recognised through weekly celebration assemblies.

There is a culture of being the best you can be. Pupils, although able to talk about the school's Christian value of kindness, are not yet able to make secure connections between kindness and the choices they make in daily life. The school has explained, modelled, and developed its seven learning values. There is no evidence that it has invested in its core Christian value of kindness in the same way or explicitly linked the learning values to kindness.

The school has deepened pupils' understanding of global issues through a federation project on the blight of plastic on the world. It was creative, cross-curricular and pupils are knowledgeable and passionate about the subject. Pupils spoke confidently about their latest social action project which is about making donations to their local food bank because, 'The homeless need it more than we do.'

Leaders and staff work passionately to ensure that the Graffham community live well together. Staff comment on how they are able to 'really celebrate every child's individuality and interests'. Consequently behaviour is good. These aspects of school life are underpinned by policies and practices, but these are not expressed from a distinctly Christian perspective. The school is welcoming and parents value the dedication and approachability of the school team, saying 'they listen and adapt to meet families' needs'. The school's secure child centred approach means that pupil voice is integral to the life of the school. Pupils are encouraged to be on the school council and in Year 2 to become a peer mediator. This has resulted in the school working more explicitly on a culture of forgiveness, linked to their Christian value of kindness. Pupils describe it as being 'able to say sorry'. Wellbeing is a priority for the school, this includes mental health. The headteacher supported the organisation of a mental health awareness conference in her locality. Staff have had emotional resilience training and the school has organised training for families on understanding anxiety, which has been well supported.

Families' responses to surveys by the school consistently illustrate how they feel welcome and included 'this is a real family/school partnership'. In Reception class there is a central interactive display of how 'Jesus loves me and my family'. There is also a 'wonder wall', not only for in-school achievement but also where pupils bring into school what is unique about them and what they feel good at. A member of staff described it as 'nurture being core to what we do'. But there is no evidence that this culture of dignity and respect has been developed in terms of each individual being created in the image of God.

The school is acutely aware of the differing needs of its families and ensures that worship or 'reflection time' is inclusive and invitational. The school has experienced turbulent times in recent years with the absence of a regular incumbent to support them in their collective worship development. However, the school were pro-active in ensuring that momentum was maintained during this time by inviting clergy from nearby parishes to lead services. The recently appointed rector is passionate and enthusiastic to further develop worship within the school and parish. She introduced Posada during Advent; large figurines of Joseph and Mary went around the school and parish community, re-enacting them looking for shelter so that baby Jesus could be born. Pupils spoke excitedly about this activity and described how they collaborated to make a shelter for them out of their large building blocks.

Services, such as harvest, remembrance, Christmas and Easter are held at church and are well supported by families. Time is taken to ensure tricky concepts are delivered in an age appropriate way and this is appreciated by families. Aspects of Anglican worship such as a greeting at the beginning, sharing the peace through a handshake, lighting of a candle, the presence of a cross, Bible readings and prayer are well established. Pupils are confident to pray within reflection time, but not all pupils are secure in their understanding and use of prayer. Pupils develop spirituality through opportunities to be still, quiet and calm, for example, pupils were invited to look at the candle and to 'feel the love coming from it'. Pupils spoke about the Splash group, who come in and take reflection time; they spoke readily about the most recent one, where the message was thankfulness linked to the Bible story of the 10 lepers. The school has started to reflect on the impact of worship but this is not in a formalised way. Pupils enjoy worship and talk about how it makes them feel 'happy and relaxed'. The school has developed reflection areas in each classroom, staff are modelling with children how they can be used, but pupils did not readily talk about how they use them independently.

The school uses the West Sussex agreed syllabus for its RE curriculum to develop pupils' knowledge of Christianity and other major world faiths. The RE leader is currently undertaking training in the delivery of the 'Understanding Christianity' resource to be used to further develop the teaching of core Christian concepts in RE. Staff have opportunities to share good practice across the federation. There have been limited opportunities for staff to attend professional development in connection with the Christian distinctiveness of Graffham as a Church school. The school does not have systems in place to assess progress and attainment in RE. Pupils are aware of Jesus as a special person in the Bible, showing us how to be kind. They know some familiar Bible stories, linked to their Christian value of kindness, but not always their meaning, For example, pupils talk about the feeding of the 5000 as an act of kindness but do not understand that it is a miracle. Pupils are not confident when relating biblical stories to their lives today. The school meets statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

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