

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Hurst Green Church of England Primary School and Nursery			
Address	London Road, Hurst Green, Etchingham, East Sussex TN19 7PN		
Date of inspection	12 March 2019	Status of school	Voluntary Controlled
Diocese	Chichester	URN	114508

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

School context

Hurst Green is a small primary and nursery school with 118 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is just below national averages. The school now has stability in leadership after several years of change. It also works together with other schools through the Quercus Federation. The religious education (RE) subject leader has been in post since September 2018.

The school's Christian vision

Live, Love and Learn with God. The vision of our Church school is to discover and develop the full and divinely entrusted talents of each individual within a secure and caring Christian community. Intrinsic to the vision are our six biblically linked core Christian values of trust, perseverance, wisdom, forgiveness, friendship and compassion.

Key findings

- There is a clear, recently revised and biblically based, Christian vision developed in collaboration between staff, pupils and governors.
- Reflecting the school's Christian vision, pupils and staff are excited about learning and work within a caring and supportive environment. Through the vision a culture is developed that enables pupils to be the best they can be (academically and personally).
- Participation in collective worship is enriched by the enthusiastic leadership of the Jesus and Me (JAM) pupil team.
- RE is enjoyed by pupils and gives them a safe space for reflection, but further developments are needed to embed consistent assessment and increase teaching expertise across all staff.
- Standards of behaviour are high and there are strong relationships evident between different parts of the school community.

Areas for development

- Consolidate and extend monitoring so that the whole school is involved in evaluating how Hurst Green lives out its Christian vision and associated values.
- Improve RE curriculum provision and ensure shared assessment approaches so that pupil attainment and progress is consistently demonstrated.
- Increase opportunities for all pupils to think more globally and engage in social action that reflects the school's Christian vision more fully and enhances pupil character development.
- Secure a clearer understanding of spiritual development that is shared by all staff and enriches curriculum planning.

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

In collaboration with the staff, pupils and governors, the school's Christian vision has been reviewed and clarified. There are now clearly identified biblical links for each of the carefully considered values. All members of the school community confidently make the school vision accessible to pupils through applying the associated values. These strategically underpin the half termly collective worship focus and are purposefully related in learning activities. For example, the whole school house learning day on wisdom.

Whilst being part of a federation, Hurst Green has a distinct Christian vision and values which express the school's identity well. Links across schools are bringing benefits, for example, in shared staff expertise. Despite the vision being in its infancy, several school policies have subsequently been reviewed and the process is continuing. Related monitoring and self-evaluation by governors are sometimes informal rather than systematic and do not always consistently focus on impact or result in development. Since the previous denominational inspection there is significantly increased pupil engagement and leadership in the school's prayer life. Pupil leaders identify how this enables their peers to enjoy collective worship more. RE subject leadership is now a separate staff responsibility. Working closely with the diocesan effectiveness partner has resulted in clear priorities for improvement and support for the new RE subject leader.

Alongside externally agreed training priorities in reading, Hurst Green School colleagues confidently work together and initiate areas for training. Professional development seeks to help all to flourish in the context of the school vision of living, loving and learning together. This culture of sharing means that classes have good learning experiences. As the Head of School is one of the Reception teachers, it strengthens relationships and leads to a more personal awareness of the needs and talents of all pupils, as identified in the school vision.

Published data on attainment outcomes for last year's small Year 6 cohort of eighteen pupils is below national averages. Intensive intervention was implemented. This included single cohort teaching in their final year, as these pupils had been impacted by several years of significant staffing changes and instability. Consequently, progress in Year 6 was improved, especially in writing and mathematics. Due to more stability and well-focused teaching, internal data shows that current pupils, including those who are vulnerable or have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making progress and demonstrating good attainment. There is close working with the progress board and consistent use of the school's assessment approach using key milestones of improvement. This encourages staff and pupils as progress is made. Pupils benefit from a varied and stimulating curriculum, with teaching and support staff working dynamically together embodying the school vision.

Pupils make positive choices in their behaviour with no recorded incidents of bullying. The vision is meaningfully used in supporting children to rebuild relationships when there is disagreement, particularly through forgiveness and friendship. The lack of any pupil exclusion, including vulnerable children who have experienced exclusion in previous schools, reflects compassionate caring for the whole child. Staff know the children, their different backgrounds and their families, exceptionally well. Diversity in the school community is recognised and celebrated. There are clear structures in place, from Nursery onwards, to support home school communication. The weekly newsletter prioritises and celebrates good attendance and children enjoy being in school. Staff are approachable and accessible and enjoy the school's caring atmosphere, all of which are highly valued by parents. Whilst staff readily share examples of their experiences of spiritual development, there is not yet an agreed definition which could be used as a basis for development.

Training on education for good mental health shapes school policies and practices, with pupils benefitting from early recognition and intervention. Parents notice the impact the school is having on their children in terms of increased confidence and the positivity of the learning environment. The biblical value of perseverance is emphasised in supporting pupils facing challenges, in an environment which also has the core emphasis of trust alongside prayer. This is aided by identified pupils having access to speech and language therapy and counselling, helping all to flourish. Local and national charity work has a high profile in the school, although without explicit links to the Christian vision or a more global and international focus. Pupils are encouraged to take the initiative in identifying causes they are concerned about and to lead associated fund raising.

Pupils and adults enjoy participating in the vibrant collective worship. Prayers, written by pupils in different year groups, reveal increasing understanding and demonstrate the benefit of reflection opportunities. A variety of

approaches to worship are utilised with the pupil leaders from the JAM group inspiring their peers to participate. Stories from the Bible are meaningfully explored and pupils consider their application in the modern world context, expressing the school's emphasis on living and learning with God. Pupils are introduced to different liturgical styles with worship structured to encourage interaction. The school community's experience of worship is enriched by taking part in services and activities, including Prayer Spaces, at the local church. The church and school relationship has a solid foundation which continues to grow.

Since taking up post, the RE subject leader has benefitted from training which has supported her development. There are firm plans in place to develop staff teaching expertise in using the 'Understanding Christianity' resource, which has yet to have an impact in the school. Assessment and monitoring approaches are not effectively used to aid learning. Pupils engage well in RE and work is adapted for different pupil abilities and mixed age teaching. Pupils encounter several world religions and world views and reflect on the significance of these beliefs. This builds on the school value of wisdom and contributes positively to a wide and rich curriculum. Pupils benefit from critically engaging with text and feel able to explore their own convictions. The many opportunities given for questioning and responding creatively in RE and across the curriculum are enhancing pupil learning and contributing positively to their spiritual development.

Executive headteachers Head of school	Keith Cheetham and Kevin Tomasetti Allison Flack
Inspector's name and number	Angela Smith 925