

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Midhurst Church of England Primary School

Vision

At Midhurst Church of England Primary School, we believe passionately in living life in all its fullness by developing the spiritual and holistic potential of each child. Our distinctively Christian values of kindness, peace, friendship, respect, creativity and forgiveness underpin the education and care we provide for the whole child, their family and school community.

Midhurst Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

Strengths

- The Christian vision at Midhurst Primary school inspires a caring, compassionate and harmonious culture. The wellbeing of pupils and staff is a major priority. This results in a welcoming and happy school.
- Partnerships between the church, parent community and diocese are unwavering and mutually beneficial. This close collaboration deeply enriches lives.
- Leaders ensure vulnerable pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), receive carefully considered support.
- Recent revisions to the whole curriculum have been driven by the vision. The extra-curricular offer is very enriching. As a result, children enjoy their learning and like attending their school.

Development Points

- Broaden the religious education (RE) curriculum to incorporate teaching about Christianity as a worldwide faith and a wider range of non-religious worldviews. This is to enable pupils to be more knowledgeable of, and respectful of difference and diversity.
- Develop a shared understanding of spirituality, so spiritual flourishing can be systematically planned for across the curriculum. This is to enable pupils and adults to immerse themselves in rich experiences that further enhance this important aspect of life.
- Ensure governors adopt a rigorous and systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating the impact of the vision in RE and collective worship. This is to support the ongoing development of Midhurst Primary as a Church school.

Inspection Findings

Midhurst Church of England Primary School is a haven of compassion and nurture. The Christian vision shapes the caring culture of school life. It is integral in the decision-making process of leaders, who strive to ensure that pupils receive the best possible education. The commitment to fostering a sense of belonging and shared purpose is clear. Staff ensure that pupils are cared for as unique individuals, and in so doing, demonstrate the vision and values in their daily actions. Staff act as role models for mutual respect and comradeship. This impacts positively on the



caring way pupils and adults treat each other. Governors are strongly committed to the school and are active participants in many aspects of its life. The work of the Chaplain is highly valued as a source of comfort to pupils and staff. Governors' loyalty provides strength and reassurance to staff. However, currently their approach to monitoring and evaluating the impact of the vision or of RE is not sufficiently systematic or rigorous. There is a long-standing, and close collaboration with the diocese, ensuring that professional development for staff remains a priority.

The recently revised curriculum has been developed with the school's Christian vision at its heart. Lessons are carefully planned to incorporate a range of learning styles. This ensures that pupils have opportunities to succeed. Provision for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is bespoke and imaginative. The establishment of a sensory room and semi-outdoor sensory circuits is illustrative of the breadth of meaningful provision. This has impacted positively on school attendance and enabled flourishing. A focus on identifying barriers to learning and implementing appropriate solutions enables pupils to access their learning. Parents readily praise staff for the support their children receive and value highly the dedication and commitment of the staff team as a whole. Pupils are excited by the extra-curricular offer which includes a broad range of sports, dance, art, music and choir. Teachers lead these activities with joy in the knowledge of the flourishing they bring. Opportunities for engaging in the natural world are many. The school has extensive school grounds and access to the South Downs National Park, and Iping Common. In these open spaces, pupils can embrace outdoor learning. Pupils acknowledge the joy these moments of awe and wonder have on them. However, the way in which pupils articulate both a shared and personal understanding of spirituality is less well developed. Opportunities exist within the curriculum to enrich personal spirituality; however, these are not currently adequately planned for or utilised.

Daily collective worship provides an opportunity for pupils and adults to bond as a school community. This is a highly valued, important part of the school day as pupils consider it to a time to 'reflect and be calm.' To aid spiritual connection, the new worship candle, which was specially dedicated by the bishop, is lit. Pupils recognise that for some people, the candle is an important connection with God and show respect for this. Leaders thoughtfully plan worship to match the school's six Christian values, with each having a particular focus each half term. The values are further linked to key times in the church calendar and school year. Therefore, worship at Midhurst Primary School provides opportunities for pupils and adults to think deeply about Bible stories and current world events. It enhances spirituality. Collective worship occurs mainly in the school's hall which is a light, and welcoming space. A strong partnership with local clergy is well-established and much valued. This means children are often able to attend collective worship in the church. Families are also welcomed to join in seasonal services in the church, and these are very well supported. The weekly celebration worship is greatly anticipated, evidencing pupils are encouraged to achieve their best and feel themselves flourishing. Singing in worship is also a highlight. The songs chosen enable pupils to sing with a deep sense of joy and respect for the sentiment of the words.

Leaders understand the context of their school and provide opportunities for positive change. A recent review of the school's behaviour policy resulted in the establishment of restorative approaches. This requires individuals to be accountable, empathetic and open to reparation. The results are evidently positive as relationships within the school are exceptionally strong. Pupils understand the clear expectations for behaviour, linked to the school vision. They show courtesy to adults, play well together and enthusiastically help each other during the day. Staff proudly



celebrate Midhurst Primary School as a 'big family where everyone matters.' It is a highly inclusive school; views are welcomed and staff wellbeing is of the utmost importance. Leaders ensure that staff have an allocated wellbeing day for designated time for themselves. Staff are supported personally and pastorally. Cohesive relationships amongst staff exemplify the school's vision. This is seen in the emotional and practical support they offer each other. Leaders are also responsive to the needs of families. The provision, which adults receive through family support work, is exceptional. Many parents and family members access an impressive and far-reaching range of activities offered by the school. The result is that families express confidence that their children are flourishing by being a pupil at Midhurst Primary School.

Pupils are encouraged to consider how they can be responsible and proactive, citizens locally and nationally. This is often learned through the wider curriculum and its events such as visits to the local fire station or talks from visitors to the school. It is also seen clearly in the school's participation in local inter-school sporting events. Pupils understand acts of kindness often require effort and resilience. The impact of action is highly successful fundraising outcomes for local and national charities, which in the main are chosen by the school council. However, opportunities for pupils to discuss a global understanding of justice are more limited.

The RE curriculum is clearly mapped so that pupils across the school learn about the major faiths of the world. It is well sequenced and balanced. Considerable revision has taken place recently and its format is in line with the curriculum of the rest of the school. This shows that RE has a high profile within the school. It meets the requirements as set by the Church of England for RE in Church schools. However, it does not cover non-religious worldviews in enough depth. There has been close collaboration with the diocese to provide training for staff. At Key Stage 2, pupils speak enthusiastically of the RE curriculum. They can articulate some of the stories of the Bible but they are not certain about Christianity as a worldwide faith.

Information

Address	Ashfield Road, Midhurst, West Sussex, GU29 9JX		
Date	Thursday 12 th December 2024	URN	125988
Type of school	Voluntary Controlled	No. of pupils	185
Diocese	Chichester		
Headteacher	Mark Jefferson		
Chair of Governors	Mark Purves		
Inspector	Pamela Gough		