

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St John the Baptist Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

School Hill, Findon, Worthing, West Sussex, BN14 0RT	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Chichester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	West Sussex
Date of inspection	17 May 2018
Date of last inspection	February 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 126027
Headteacher	Richard Yelland
Inspector's name and number	Jacqueline Cobb 926

School context

This small rural school is situated in the village of Findon. It has been on its current site since 1872. There have been structural building changes, the last in 2009, to support a growing school population and to improve its provision. It is comprised of five classes, and because of its size, these usually contain two year groups. The majority of pupils come from the village and from a predominately White British background. The percentage for whom the school receives extra funding due to social disadvantage is below the national average. There are strong links with the parish church.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St John the Baptist as a Church of England school are good

- The headteacher's good leadership is successfully focusing on the development and celebration of the school's Christian and nurturing ethos.
- The school's strong Christian values, demonstrated in the inclusive and caring relationships across the school community, enhances pupils' personal development.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) provision is highly effective and pupils respond positively to this

Areas to improve

- Develop the role and expertise of governors so that their monitoring and evaluation of the school's Christian distinctiveness and its impact of the school community is effective in driving forward developments as a church school.
- Ensure the consistency of teaching and learning in religious education (RE) so that best practice is shared and standards of attainment and progress increase.

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

The school's strong and unmistakably Christian distinctiveness shines brightly through the vibrant displays and interactive reflection areas throughout the building. These stimulating and creative displays reflect how Christian values are interwoven into everyday experiences. They purposefully contribute to pupils' excellent behaviour, high levels of attendance, strong relationships and positive attitudes to learning. Pupils speak powerfully of the impact of the school's core Christian values, 'Jesus showed us how he used these values in the Bible. We can use them in our everyday life too'. Pupils have developed a sense of social responsibility and are committed to supporting a range of local, national and global humanitarian charities. An example of this is two pupils having their hair cut to donate it to a wig making charity for young people who were seriously ill. Likewise Year 6 pupils ran a café, the proceeds of which went to buying Bibles for Syrian refugees. Older pupils can clearly link their charitable fund raising to living out the school's Christian values and can express this in terms of teachings from the Bible, 'to help and give to others'. Parents actively choose the school because of its care, compassion and nurture of all pupils: 'all staff know every child for who they are'. They rightly recognise this as an expression of the school's Christian foundation. The curriculum is very well planned, with a focus on encouraging children to learn through doing. This is achieved through four strands of growing, cooking, filming and asking questions and reflection. It has resulted in a curriculum that is rich and stimulating. Pupils engage very well with a wide range of activities that promote high levels of academic and SMSC development. This expressly reflects the school's Christian and inclusive learning environment. Pupils' progress across the school is good and in some cases accelerated. Attainment is at least in line with or above national expectations for pupils at the expected standard. All pupils, including the most vulnerable, achieve success in their learning and thus make at least good progress. More vulnerable pupils are well supported. For example, a parent, whose child has additional needs said that their child is 'celebrated for their individuality and encouraged to shine as a person'. The school's link with a village in Kenya through, 'Feeding Futures' extends pupils' understanding of Christianity as a global faith very well. RE is allocated dedicated curriculum time. However, it is not studied in isolation but supports and is supported by other elements of the curriculum through appropriate and carefully planned links. This results in pupils making connections between the teaching of different faiths, learning about a range of cultures and about the importance of Christian values, especially that of respect. Thus RE makes a very positive contribution to both the school's Christian ethos and to pupils' developing appreciation of and respect for difference and diversity.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is integral to the school's daily life. It is rightly recognised as an important part of the day by the staff, pupils, parents and governors. Pupils understand that it provides an opportunity to speak to God. One pupil said that after worship 'you are feeling lighter because you can share any concerns with God'. The worship programme strongly promotes the school's Christian ethos and values. It is clearly linked to the Bible and the teachings of Jesus. This means that pupils can reflect on stories from the Bible and what they mean in today's world. One pupil said, 'God protected Daniel in the lion's den. I know He can always see me and that Jesus is always there for me'. Worship is carefully planned by the headteacher working with the vicar. Each of the school's Christian values and events from the church year are taken as themes on a two year cycle. This plan provides for aspirational and inspirational worship to take place. One of the strengths of worship is its application to everyday life. Pupils are confident in taking an active role in all aspects of worship through drama, music and leading prayers and through evaluating and thinking about the impact it has on them. These thoughts then feed into continued development and improvement. Pupils and adults engage well in worship and recognises its impact on them as individuals both spiritually and morally. 'School gets you into religion, so you know you can still turn to God in high school'. Worship also helps them appreciate, in age-appropriate ways, Anglican traditions. For example, the significance of lighting candles and its meaning in worship is securely embedded in pupils understanding. Whilst key Christian beliefs such as the concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is taught with a 'home made' tapestry based on the one in Chichester Cathedral. Worship is led by the headteacher, his deputy, and members of the teaching staff, the vicar and various visitors including, for example, a representative of the Worthing Churches Homeless project. Reflection and prayer are important and impact positively on school life. As well as prayers in assemblies, and at lunch time, pupils also benefit from the opportunity to use an outside spiritual garden. Pupils recognise how prayer helps them: 'stuff inside you comes out when you pray and you can ask God for help'. Worship and prayer opportunities within school impact deeply on pupils. Interactive classroom reflection areas focus effectively on the school's identified Christian values. Pupils can explain how and why they set up the reflection areas and how it helps them explore the meaning of the value being focused on in greater depth. A class prayer book, created by younger children in the Autumn term has been put to good use, appropriately enhancing their engagement and appreciation of prayer.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The headteacher is the RE subject leader, ensuring its high profile within the school. 'Understanding Christianity' is a programme that explores significant Christian concepts such as incarnation and salvation. It focuses on doing this as part of developing a wider religious, theological and cultural understanding. The programme has recently been introduced and is already impacting constructively on improving standards and progress. However, it is not embedded which means that there is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Overall, RE is taught imaginatively. It makes a strong contribution to SMSC and the school's Christian ethos. Attainment is broadly at age related expectations and progress is good. Pupils actively engage and enjoy RE, applying first hand experiences and creative art such as drama, debate and cooking. This enables pupils to explore, reflect and understand biblical teaching, Christian beliefs and an appropriate range of world faiths well. Monitoring of RE, indicates that pupils have an appropriate curriculum within RE and a rich range of opportunities to enhance their learning. Marking of RE books follows school procedures. Best practice challenges pupils to reflect on what they have learned, but this is not consistently the case across all classes. Pupils display a keenness to learn about and appropriately respectful attitudes towards faiths such as Judaism and Islam, studied in addition to Christianity. They make connections to worship and the school's Christian values such as peace. The school meets statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

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

The headteacher, successfully, articulates and lives out a Christian vision for the school. School staff dedicate much time to successfully developing the academic and personal development of pupils, including identifying and removing any barriers to learning. The school's strong Christian ethos and vision, lived out by the school community, has resulted in an aspirational and inclusive learning environment. The school takes seriously its nurture and professional development of staff. For example, new staff are well supported and developed as teachers in a church school through mentoring and support with the teaching of RE. In addition, senior leaders are pro-active in developing middle leadership to ensure sustainability of future leadership. Previous deputy headteachers have moved on to headship roles in other schools. During the previous academic year the school revisited its deeply embedded vision and Christian values. This has led to a refined vision by the addition of explicit links to biblical texts and the gifts of the Holy Spirit such as peace, kindness, joy and love. However, due to the relative newness of this enhancement to the vision and values, its impact has not yet been evaluated. Governors are a visible presence in the school and hold it to account, as evidenced in their meeting minutes. They are committed to the school's Christian ethos and work well with the headteacher and his deputy. However, governors do not sufficiently link their monitoring and evaluation of the school's Christian distinctiveness with clear next steps in driving forward developments. Links with the parish church and local community are very strong, enriching the school's Christian character. Welcoming the wider community to school events such as Christmas, Easter and the leavers' services held in the parish church ensures that the school maintains a high profile in village life.

SIAMS report May 2018 St John the Baptist, Findon, West Sussex BN14 0TR