

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Albourne Church of England Primary School

The Street, Albourne, West Sussex. BN6 9DH

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese / Methodist District	Chichester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	West Sussex
Date of inspection	08 February 2017
Date of last inspection	18 May 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	126014
Headteacher	Alison Sturgeon
Inspector's name and number	Connie Hughes 765

School context

Albourne CE Primary is a one form entry rural school with 198 pupils on roll. Pupils come from the village and the surrounding area. The majority of pupils are of a White British heritage with a range of social and economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average. A significant number of newly qualified staff have joined the school since September 2015. Following a period without a vicar, a new incumbent was appointed to the parish in the summer of 2016.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Albourne as a Church of England school is good.

- The school's motto 'On our learning journey together' and core Christian values underpin the spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences of pupils, preparing them to become responsible citizens. Classroom reflection areas make some contribution to the pupils' spiritual development.
- Outstanding pastoral care and support for all pupils nurtures the development of the whole child.
- Collective worship and religious education contributes to pupils' good knowledge and understanding of Christianity, the Bible and world faiths.
- The commitment of the senior leadership team, well supported by staff, ensures that Christian beliefs and values are part of pupils' daily experiences in school. The recently formed 'faith group' is making an increasing contribution to the evaluation of the school as a church school.

Areas to improve

- Make explicit reference to the school's Christian ethos and values in all communications with parents and the wider community to raise the profile of its church foundation in the daily life of the school.
- Provide more structured learning experience of prayer and purposefully enhance interactive classroom reflection areas to enrich the spiritual life of the school for pupils.
- Ensure the recently established governors 'faith group' committee's monitoring and evaluation programme, secures explicit evidence of the effectiveness of Albourne as a church school on meeting the needs of all pupils.

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

Relationships between the pupils and staff are strongly influenced by Christian values evident in the commitment of the senior leadership team. In a calm and purposeful atmosphere, pupils and staff treat each other with kindness, respect and understanding. Pupils explained, 'following Jesus' commandment to love another...love your neighbour...is what we do'. Positive behaviour and attitudes to learning are a strength of the school. 'We work and learn together, we don't leave anyone behind', explained pupils. Learning intervention strategies to support pupils with special needs, including pastoral care, emotional, social and academic support are outstanding. Parents emphasised and expressed their children are happy, well looked after and safe, 'with specific disabilities provided for to the highest standards'. The recent pupil progress data indicates that all groups of children, including the most vulnerable, make good progress in their learning. Although senior leaders are more focussed on securing evidence of the impact of its Christian distinctiveness on all pupils' daily life, to be judged as outstanding this has to be more explicit in the daily life of the school and community. For example, sharing its Christian faith foundation, aims and values with parents and carers.

The school's motto 'On our learning journey together' and the core Christian values of respect, responsibility, perseverance and trust prepare pupils to become responsible citizens. An inspiring portfolio of photographs on the website, vibrant corridor displays incorporating Christian and British values, reflect and celebrate spiritual, moral social and cultural (SMSC) learning that pupils experience. The use of the classroom reflection areas to enrich pupils' spiritual development are underused. Participation in activities organised during a visit from the 'Enable Me' disability awareness charity, enabled pupils to reflect on the physical needs, challenges and unique life of disabled people. Pupils are pro-active and caring, finding practical ways to respond to the needs of their world community; 'we have to remember we have a responsibility to look after our neighbours', a pupil stated. They consistently support a breadth of charitable causes including Harvest gifts for Fare Share, Children in Need and the Kassis Orphanage in Zambia. A range of cross-curricular experiences strongly contribute to pupils' knowledge, understanding and respect for diverse faiths and cultures, including corresponding with the Archbishop of Canterbury, a visit to Chichester cathedral and a Hindu temple in Crawley. Pupils were enthusiastic when sharing their knowledge of global diversity, through media communication and staff exchange visits with their multi-faith partner school in a predominately Christian village on the outskirts of Bangalore. Religious education (RE), taught through discrete teaching and cross-curricular topics, embeds the distinctive Christian character of the school. It purposefully contributes to pupils' understanding of Anglican beliefs, Jesus' teaching, Christianity as a world religion, SMSC development, knowledge and respect for major world faiths. The school is trialling the 'Understanding Christianity' resource, well received by staff as it enhances and challenges pupils thinking and deeper learning.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Distinctively Christian leadership of daily collective worship from the headteacher, staff and vicar significantly influences the Christian ethos of the school. The headteacher provides well-structured, creatively resourced themes, strongly contributing to pupils' knowledge and understanding of the Church year, biblical teaching and Christian and moral values. Themes incorporate a strong focus on pupils' spiritual and moral development through the 'Values for Life' programme. A clear focal point for worship, enables pupils to experience and develop an understanding of Anglican tradition, liturgy, beliefs and practice through school and parish church acts of worship. Attitudes towards collective worship are extremely positive, 'we learn about God, new stories from the Old and New Testament... it's fun, enjoyable and we're taught new songs'. Reflection and prayer are central to the pupils' worship experiences and purposefully contribute to their spiritual development. Lighting the altar candle at the start of worship, explained the pupils, 'shows us Jesus is the light of the world... He is there helping us every day'. Pupils were attentive, engaged and responsive to headteacher led worship. Creative use of multimedia imagery reflects the importance and symbolism of the Trinity in Christian worship, effectively contributing to deepening pupils spiritual understanding. The 'School Creed', the Lord's Prayer and the 'candle prayer' are well known and understood by staff and pupils. Pupils explain how their recent learning of teaspoon prayer is a helpful way to talk to God and Jesus about their lives, 'we thank you for..., we are sorry for...and please remember...'. Although pupils are developing an understanding of the importance of prayer through worship, there is a lack of structured learning experiences. Links with the village church, successfully maintained by the deacon during a sustained period without a vicar, are rapidly strengthening. The vicar works purposefully with school leaders and pupils to explore, reflect and develop their core Christian values, Anglican faith foundation and beliefs. For example, the vicar supports worship planning with house captains, who regularly lead acts of worship, in their understanding of biblical teaching of the Christian value of 'forgiveness'. The church is used to support religious education, celebrate major church festivals and the school's annual Year 6 'leavers service', attended by pupils and families. Church organised family services are increasingly well-attended, for example, the Christmas crib service. A cycle of visits from local Christian community ministry teams further enhance pupils worship experiences. Monitoring and evaluation of worship is not consistently used by the senior leadership team, the governing body and pupils to secure explicit evidence of its impact and influence on the daily life of the school and community.

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

'Our headteacher works tirelessly to ensure all children are offered opportunities to develop academically and spiritually' explained staff. Senior leaders are explicit in maintaining that the aims, ethos and 'chosen Christian values are at the heart of all they do'. Close partnership with all staff, multi-agencies, parents and carers enables pupils achieve to achieve good progress in their work and their personal development. Ensuring a holistic approach to the well-being of all pupils, outstanding pastoral care and support for all pupils underpins the development of the whole child. Parents emphasised, 'the nurture and care that the school puts in... reflects its Christian values... and promotes the ethos of the school as a church school'.

The senior leadership team have a clear understanding of the impact of the school's Christian ethos and values on pupils' performance. Although the governors are supportive of the school leaders and are developing their strategic roles there is limited evidence of them evaluating the effectiveness of the school's Christian distinctiveness on the life of the whole school. The recently established governing body 'faith group' committee, inclusive of the vicar, is gathering and collating high quality evaluative evidence of its Christian ethos, worship and religious education provision, identifying strengths and addressing areas for improvement. The vicar, writing directly to parents and children through an introductory newsletter, emphasised the importance of school's 'Christian faith and values in all aspects of their lives'. Working within the Christian character of the school is an essential aspect of all new teacher appointments. Future leadership of church schools is being addressed through the professional development of the deputy headteacher who joined the school in September 2014.

Established collaboration with the local authority, local churches and church schools, the diocese and education providers secures appropriate staff professional development and enriched spiritual provision for all pupils. For example, whole school staff training on evaluating the provision and impact of the school's Christian vision and values, the religious education 'Understanding Christianity' resource and the annual diocesan Leaver's Service in Worth Abbey. The headteacher, as a guest speaker at the local church family service, shared and celebrated the school's Christian distinctiveness with parishioners. Members of the local church consistently support school activities, including running the 'little fishes' bible activity club.

Relationships, shared activities and transition arrangements with the village nursery are well established. School held weekly 'stay and play' sessions in the hall for pre-school children engage parents in early years' education in a church school. Many parents identified the school's faith foundation has 'a definite influence on everything the school does'. More explicit information in parent newsletters and questionnaires are to be put in place to inform the parents and give them opportunities to share their views on the church school ethos. The parent's association support the school through fundraising and active participation in school events. Statutory requirements for religious education and collective worship are met.

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