

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St George's Wrotham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Old London Road, Sevenoaks, TN15 7DL	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Rochester
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of inspection	7 February 2018
Date of last inspection	December 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary – Voluntary Controlled – 118635
Headteacher	David Jones
Inspector's name and number	Niki Paterson 883

School context

This small primary school serves the immediate community of the village of Wrotham and has 211 pupils on roll. The school was judged as outstanding by Ofsted in March 2008. The school is part of the Pilgrims Way partnership with other local church schools. The number of pupils who are disadvantaged and eligible for pupil premium funding is below the national average. The number of pupils in need of support for special educational needs is above the national average. 90% of pupils are of White British heritage.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St George's Wrotham as a Church of England school are outstanding

- High aspirations, compassion and a celebration of each child's unique worth ensure that every child flourishes, particularly the most vulnerable.
- Excellent relationships with the local church reflect a joint mission to serve the local community
- Collective worship is highly valued by the whole community, including parents, and has been developed by excellent practice which reflects the pupils' ideas and wishes.
- Leaders have created an ethos where respect, trust and kindness nurture the development of all staff.

Areas to improve

- Enhance the distinctiveness of the school's vision and values and, consequently, its policies so that they are clearly rooted in biblical teaching.
- Ensure governor monitoring is focussed on the impact and outcomes of the school's distinctiveness so that the school can continue to develop as a church school.
- Embed the teaching of the Christian belief of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit so that pupils can talk about this with understanding and confidence.

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

The school community draws on the Christian values of respect, courage, forgiveness, honesty, kindness and hope. These permeate both the school's teaching practices and its physical environment. They are firmly embedded in the working life of the school and drive the headteacher's vision to enable every child to achieve well and to be responsible members of their community. Parents talk highly of the school and how well pupils are cared for and respected as individuals. This is an expression of how the school lives out its value of kindness particularly well. Pupil voice, through a group called the 'Leading Lights', is used well to monitor how Christian distinctiveness is impacting on daily practice. Systems are effective in encouraging pupils to look after one another. For example, all Reception pupils have a Year 6 'buddy' and pupils are awarded with 'kindness' tokens. In addition, this inclusive ethos has been particularly successful in welcoming families who are newly arrived to the school. Pupils and school leaders can articulate how the school's Christian values, embedded through daily practice, are underpinning supportive relationships and attitudes to learning. For example, the school value of 'hope' for each child has led to the deployment of additional support structures for vulnerable pupils and for their families. As a result, attainment has been maintained at levels above the national average and all groups make strong progress. Attendance is also above the national expectation and exclusions are exceptionally rare. Pupils can make some reference to particular bible stories and how these exemplify the school's Christian values. However, these biblical links are not made clear to all stakeholders or made evident in school policies.

Pupils value the presence of the reflective spaces in their classrooms and an outdoor quiet space which can be freely accessed. Pupils and staff are encouraged to be reflective and religious education (RE) is well taught. These experiences contribute very well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development and, in turn, this is well supported by the school's Christian and inclusive ethos. Pupils have an understanding of their responsibility to love others in their community and beyond by organising their own fundraising to support local and national projects. For example, the pupil-led school council headed fundraising efforts for the Christian charity 'Fields of Life'. This, in turn, deepens pupils' understanding of the links between Christian values and SMSC learning. RE has a high profile and is well taught through challenge and intuitive open questioning. Thus, it supports pupils' spiritual and moral development well. Pupils have some awareness of Christianity as a worldwide faith through the school's multi-cultural awareness week and links to a school in Uganda. Pupils rightly recognise that RE encourages them to appreciate difference and diversity through, for example, well supported visits to the local mosque, synagogue and gurdwara.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.

Distinctively Christian collective worship, which is focused on the teaching and inspiration of Jesus, is clearly valued by the community. Pupils are attentive, responsive and are joyful in their praise. They understand the purpose of worship and enjoy being given a 'challenge for the day'. For example, in the collective worship observed on the school value of kindness, pupils were reminded of the Christian belief that they have the responsibility to choose their words carefully to demonstrate this value. Worship is well led by a wide range of leaders, including staff, clergy and pupils. This ensures that pupils experience a variety of styles in worship and helps to maintain high levels of engagement. Pupils are well developed as leaders of worship. They play a regular role in the liturgical practice of every time of worship. They frequently plan and lead services in church with the local rector. This includes community celebrations, such as a joint 'Festival of Fusion and Light' service hosted by St George's for other local schools and more traditional services. Christian values are integral to the content of worship, which is rooted in biblical teaching. Daily planning is informed by diocesan planning and other sources of Christian worship guidance. Monitoring by pupils and staff ensures that this evolves to meet the needs of the school community.

Through worship and RE, pupils have some understanding of the Christian concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, although this is underdeveloped. Pupils are familiar with Anglican traditions, principally through the celebration and observance of festivals linked to the Christian calendar. Other key Anglican practices such as, for example, opening and closing sentences with responses and other liturgical forms of worship are familiar practices. Prayer is made meaningful, as both pupils and staff members write and deliver prayer which is relevant to the current needs of the community. Pupils are very familiar with the Lord's prayer and understand its importance for Christians. Parents welcome the opportunity to engage in worship with their children in church, which includes attending a special Sunday family service periodically throughout the year. This further supports the school's links with its parish church and families well.

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

The distinctive and focused leadership of the headteacher and his deputy is developing a whole school approach to enable every child to flourish. This is rooted in a shared Christian ethos of service to others. Both the teaching and support staff are cohesive in their approach to realise the school's motto: bringing faith and education together. As a result, they are selfless in their drive to meet the needs of individual pupils. This has helped to maintain high academic progress for all groups. A strong relationship with the parish church is clearly evidenced through the integral role of the rector and local congregation. The rector is highly involved in the governance and pastoral life of the school and is well known to the pupils and their families. Good communication with parents, through bespoke RE and collective worship newsletters, means that they are highly supportive of the school's Christian foundation and its joint working with its church. Parents fully appreciate the welcoming and hospitable ethos which they say is evident from the transition from pre-school onwards. They also value a gift of an individual age-appropriate bible in Reception and again in Year 5, the latter of which is gifted by the church. These are used regularly at school.

School leaders have been proactive in highlighting the Christian values, so that they have a personal meaning for every child. For example, families have been encouraged to talk openly at home about how the values are individually important to each child. However, the Christian teaching which underpins the vision and values is not fully documented or shared beyond the school. Christian leadership is lived out by senior leaders who value and nurture other school staff to achieve their potential. This has led to good succession planning, staff retention and wellbeing, as individuals are appreciated and recognised for their skills and efforts. Staff members are supported by professional development at diocesan and national level. The RE leader keeps up to date with new initiatives in RE as a serving member of the local authority standing advisory council for RE (SACRE). This has resulted in a shared understanding of distinctiveness and has ensured that standards in RE are prioritised. Areas for development from the previous denominational inspection have therefore been addressed. A cycle of reflective and insightful self-evaluation incorporates a range of stakeholder views, including the views of pupils and parents. This is well matched to school improvement priorities. Governors prioritise the religious character of the school and regular monitoring by governors is in place. However, this is currently limited in its impact on moving the school forward as a church school. Statutory requirements for the provision of RE and collective worship are met and both areas are well led and managed.

SIAMS report (February 2018) St George's Wrotham CE (VC) Primary School,