

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Nicolas and St Mary Church of England Primary School

Eastern Avenue Shoreham-by-Sea West Sussex BN43 6PE

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Chichester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	West Sussex
Date of inspection	7 December 2016
Date of last inspection	20-21 June 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 126049
Acting headteacher	Andrew Lincoln
Executive headteacher	David Etherton
Inspector's name and number	Rosemary Appleby 749

School context

St Nicolas and St Mary CE Primary School is larger than an average-sized primary school and pupil numbers have significantly increased since the last inspection. There are 393 pupils on role including those in the nursery. Currently there are extensive building works to enable the school to become two form entry. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average, as is the number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Attendance is higher the national average. The Acting headteacher (the substantive deputy) has been in post since January 2016 whilst the substantive headteacher is seconded to the Diocese for four and half days per week. St Nicolas and St Mary CE Primary School has applied to the Department for Education to set up a new 'sister' primary church school in Shoreham.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Nicolas and St Mary as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Christian values have a significant influence on pupils' daily lives resulting in exemplary behaviour, positive attitudes to learning and high levels of attainment.
- Inspirational and passionate leadership from the school leadership team ensures that the Christian ethos is continually evolving for the benefit of all children. They lead by example through their Christian faith.
- Collective worship is central to the school's Christian character and has a memorable impact on all those who attend.
- The close links with parents, the local church and the wider community contribute significantly to the promotion of the school's Christian values.

Areas to improve

- Develop pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith to enable them to develop a greater appreciation of the global nature of Christianity.
- Embed RE assessment so that it clearly demonstrates the long term progress year on year made by pupils.

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

St Nicolas and St Mary school has an explicit and deeply embedded Christian ethos which is understood and valued by all the school community and evident in aspects of school life. The school badge, worn with pride by pupils, reinforces the school's intent that their faith in God is central. The Latin motto of 'Nihil Sine Deo' (Nothing without God) is understood by the school community. This school actively lives out its mission statement of 'Journey together guided by God to do the best we can'. The impact of the Christian character of the school is outstanding because the school's Christian values are consistently understood and clearly articulated by all members of the school community. The ethos is underpinned by five Christian values chosen by the school community and developed over the past year of friendship, compassion, respect, creativity and hope. Learners say that these values 'influence our lives'. Pupils know that the Christian value of hope is about 'trusting in God, he is by your side at every moment'. Parents know that the 'values are underpinned by Bible verses' which can be found on the school's website, displayed around the school and are the 'bedrock' of the school. Parents value the school's explicitness about its Christian ethos because it provides a common language between school and home. The Christian ethos is evident in the excellent inclusive and positive caring relationships across the school community and the exemplary behaviour seen around the school. It contributes significantly to pupil achievement which current data indicates is above national average. Stunning displays around the school make a significant contribution to social, moral, spiritual, and cultural education and the use of questions is indicative of the enquiring, analytical and reflective skills securely used by learners in Religious Education (RE). Creative RE displays include 'Who is God', 'and' Do you think that everything should always be forgiven?' and include thoughtful responses from learners. Displays about partner schools in Sierra Leone, France and London and learning about religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism develop compassion, empathy and respect for other cultures. However, pupil's understanding of the global nature of Christianity is not yet secure. Pupils understand that giving money for charity, such as Children in need and Jeans for Genes links to the Christian values of compassion and friendship.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is at the centre of the school's daily life. Christian values, linked to biblical references, are effectively and creatively reinforced. This ensures that the vision and values of the school remain central to the life of the school community. Pupils are actively engaged and respectful through participation in all elements of worship such as singing, reflection time, saying the greeting and grace, reading from the Bible, and praying. They know that worship is important because they 'gather together to celebrate God as Christians'. Parents view the church and school services as extensions of each other and for some the high profile of clergy in school has meant that as a family they are now 'more engaged with the church'. Aspects of Anglican worship such as saying The Lord's prayer, lighting a candle and singing hymns, are established and reflect the shape of Anglican worship. Pupils learn about important times in the church year for example they know that that Advent is preparing for Christmas and this is linked to the Christian value of hope. There is an appropriate focus on the centrality of Jesus Christ in worship and pupils talk about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit with a growing appreciation. Pupils have a wide knowledge and deep understanding of biblical material and can relate this to their own lives and Christian values with clarity. One pupil interviewed said that the exodus story from the Bible taught you that you should listen to God and in times of adversity you should 'try to hear God's voice as it lifts you up'. Pupils experience a range of settings and leaders for worship which enriches the experience of worship and extends the range of Anglican traditions. The setting for whole school worship in the hall engages the community. The stunning wooden cross designed by pupils and made by staff and the altar table with altar cloths designed by pupils reflecting the colours of the church year ensure that worship is a distinct and joyous time. Detailed planning and evaluation of worship involves a range of stakeholders and ensures that the high quality of worship is maintained. Older pupils plan and lead worship in a creative way such as creating a friendship dance. The pupil Dream Team work together to develop prayer, reflection work and evaluate worship. Through a pupil request worship has recently been celebrated outside. Prayer has a high profile in the school. Pupils write their own thoughtful prayers for inclusion in prayers before lunch, at the end of the school day and in worship reinforcing its importance. Pupils know that you both pray to and listen to God and that you put your trust in him. The focus on prayer spaces has ensured that prayer remains central to the school. Pupils say that they value this time because it gives them time to reflect and think and parents say that their children recreate prayer spaces at home because they have been inspired at school.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

All staff recognise and value the importance of being in a church school and RE is seen as a core subject. An enquiry based approach to the teaching of RE enables learners to effectively reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual understanding. In addition the use of the 'Big Question' approach such as 'Why was Jesus inspirational?' has increased pupils' reflection and analytical skills. Because teachers are skilled at asking probing

questions pupils are able to make connections between different faiths and beliefs. For example, when talking about the Jewish meal of Passover pupils linked the sacrifice of the lamb eaten to the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross to save us all. Pupil interviews show that learners have been inspired by RE because they have time for reflection and that they enjoy learning about other religions when visiting a Mosque or sharing the Jewish meal of Passover. The RE leader is passionate, knowledgeable and proactive in ensuring staff and learners develop sound RE knowledge and understanding. She leads staff meetings, moderates RE work, scrutinises and observes RE practice across the school. This enables her to take action, where needed, to improve RE provision and staff are given written and verbal feedback to enable them to understand the next steps for better outcomes. Governors undertake interviews with pupils about RE. After a recent governor visit individual Bibles were purchased for all pupils in years 4, 5 and 6 as pupils said that they would like to be able to read more Bible stories themselves, increasing pupil interaction in RE lessons and worship. RE training for staff has been a priority and has enabled teachers to approach the subject in a creative and cross-curricular way which inspires pupils in their learning. Pupils in the school nursery enjoy dressing up and role playing the nativity reflecting appropriate RE provision from the start of their school lives. There is a range of recorded work in RE in dedicated RE books, learning journals, prayer books and journey together books reflecting that RE is cross-curricular. Lessons are detailed and well planned with appropriate differentiation. However this differentiation is not always clearly evidenced in recorded work. Assessment has been recently revised to reflect the new RE curriculum and teachers use termly assessment sheets which record which RE objectives have been met. This is placed on an electronic school tracking system. The use of assessment through teacher questions and thoughtful pupil responses takes learning forward and illustrates RE progress across the school. Current data indicates that RE attainment data is significantly higher than other core subjects and national expectations in the majority of year groups. The RE leader plans to track progress in RE in all classes which is evidenced in her detailed and appropriate action plan.

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

The headteacher, staff team and governing body clearly articulate a strong understanding of how their Christian vision gives direction for the whole school community. They lead by example through their own faith and this is recognised by the school community. They are passionate about serving the needs not only of their school but of schools across the Diocese. Their outstanding Christian leadership is also recognised externally and they willingly share their expertise with visitors from other schools. The executive headteacher supported local schools after the Shoreham Air Show tragedy in 2015. He wrote prayers and scripts that other leaders could use to help their school communities during this difficult time. One impact of their Christian outreach and outstanding practice is that the school has been strongly encouraged to support the application for a new 'sister' Church of England school in Shoreham. If agreed, the new school will reflect the high standards of St Nicolas and St Mary framed by the same strong Christian ethos. Leaders have been proactive in fully addressing the key issue from the previous inspection. There is now high quality provision across the school. School development plans include explicit action points linked to Christian distinctiveness, worship and RE. These action plans reflect the commitment of leaders to continually improve Christian distinctiveness. Information from leaders' accurate self-evaluation is fed into the strategic planning cycle and informs discussion around the improvement plan. Governors are committed to the Christian ethos of the school and support the school very well. Their ethos and worship committee minutes illustrate that they have effectively evaluated and monitored the school's Christian foundation over time and that they ask challenging questions to ensure that Christ is central to the school. Links with the local church community are strong and supportive. Clergy lead worship in and out of school and were involved in writing the school prayer. There are strong links with many local churches, local schools and schools further afield in London, France, and Sierra Leone. This ensures that the school is outward looking and can learn from others as well as share their own successes. Staff are well supported in their professional development and this effectively increases the skills and knowledge they have to further develop the school. Succession planning is a strength in this school. The acting headteacher confidently leads the school while the executive headteacher is working with the Diocese and the RE leader was effectively able to take on the position of assistant headteacher. The arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements.

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