

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Woodchurch Church of England (VC) Primary School

Bethesden Road,
Woodchurch
Ashford
Kent TN26 3QJ

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese / Methodist District	Canterbury
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Kent
Date/s of inspection	23 November 2016
Date of last inspection	9 September 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 118672
Headteacher	Rachael Harrington
Inspector's name and number	Virginia Corbyn 86

School context

Woodchurch primary school is smaller than the average-sized primary school with seven small classes. The number of pupils known to be eligible for additional support through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, is well below the national average. A significant proportion of the school is from a White British background. Few of the pupils have direct links with a church. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is above the national average. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. Attainment is broadly in line with national and Kent expectations.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Woodchurch as a Church of England school are good

- School leaders have successfully established a set of explicit Christian values which supports and drives the achievement, wellbeing and personal development of all pupils.
- These values are the basis for strong relationships at all levels, characterised particularly by koinonia (community) and friendship.
- Pupils are able to draw on opportunities for prayer and reflection to show how they understand and apply their Christian values.
- Partnerships with the church, community, families and other local rural schools enrich the educational experiences of all pupils.

Areas to improve

- Develop pupils' roles in worship more widely so that pupils fully understand the importance of the part they play as leaders of this aspect of the life of the school.
- Ensure that pupils' thinking about big questions in religious education (RE) and across the curriculum develops religious literacy as strongly as it currently enhances spiritual development.

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

Over the past two years, school leaders have established a set of Christian values (koinonia/community, compassion, friendship, forgiveness, thankfulness and endurance), which are clearly based on biblical principles. The impact of these values can be seen in the good or better progress made by all pupils. The application of particular values in specific classes, such as koinonia in reception, means that the youngest pupils' language and communication progress well. Pupils understand the importance of applying the values in their learning, giving examples of how they have used compassion to help others in their class when they are stuck and used endurance when they are frustrated. For parents, the school 'helps our children to be the children that we want them to be' by making sure that pupils use the values to build a strong moral compass. Home learning challenges such as the Good Samaritan project have helped parents to gain a better understanding of the Christian basis for and application of the values. Relationships at all levels embody the school's values enabling staff to nurture pupils in order to meet their individual needs.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) needs of pupils are well met. A focus on prayer and reflection means that pupils are confident in expressing their own spirituality. Pupils of all religions and of none talk about the many ways in which they can offer their prayers. Class reflection areas, which are age appropriate, are well used as are special books of pupils' prayers in classrooms. Prayers at lunchtime and at the end of the day shape the daily life of the school. Pupils' prayers form the basis for special occasions such as remembrance and the major Christian festivals. A parents' prayer group uses the children's prayer requests to pray for the school. Moral and social development, related to the Christian value of compassion, is demonstrated by pupils regularly raising money for a wide range of charities.

Pupils say that they love learning about other religions in their RE lessons which is important because 'we learn to let other people have their beliefs'. They talk openly about their own beliefs whether they have a faith or not. Effective developmental marking in RE means that pupils are encouraged to reflect on their learning which promotes spiritual development well. Pupils' religious literacy is less developed especially in relation to 'big' questions. The celebration of festivals such as Eid and Chinese New Year provides a real experience of diversity. Acceptance of all by all is another way in which the diversity of the school community is celebrated alongside the school's commitment to inclusion through the value of koinonia.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is a key time for exploring the Christian values of the school in relation to biblical stories and teachings. Clear and simple messages which help pupils to reflect on values and apply them in their lives are conveyed. One pupil explained that this means that 'using the values we can be that sort of person and change who we are'. Pupils' spirituality is developed well within worship as they offer their own prayers with increasing regularity and confidence. They say that they value daily times for quietness and reflection. The pupils are proud of their special school prayer incorporating their six Christian values, which the curate helped them to write. Worship takes place in the church every fortnight and, for pupils, this is 'an important part of being a church school'. Local clergy lead worship regularly and 'Open the Book', which uses the local church community to tell Bible stories through drama, has been developed to provide a richer and more varied experience for pupils. Special occasions and major Christian festivals have provided important opportunities for pupils to plan and lead worship, working with the curate to write their own materials. However, pupils do not feel that they currently have enough opportunities to lead worship although levels of participation are high. Understanding of the Trinity is being developed using a Trinitarian candle, responses and an increased focus on teaching within planning for worship. Parent involvement in weekly Friday worship has increased significantly. These times are used effectively to share what the school has learnt together about their Christian values during the previous week.

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

The commitment of the leaders of the school, in particular that of the headteacher, has ensured that the Christian vision and values of the school are readily articulated by all stakeholders. They understand that these values underpin the good progress of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, those who lack resilience and those who join the school at different times. School leaders and staff live out the belief that their values demand that they are as inclusive as they can possibly be. For all of them, meeting the individual needs of their pupils and their families is 'living our values'. Governors spoke about the hardship that sometimes comes with being inclusive, saying 'we find the resources even if that is costly for us'. Self-evaluation of the school as a church school is accurate, realistic and aspirational. The issues from the previous denominational report have been addressed.

Statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met. Consultation with stakeholders informs plans to drive improvement, especially the views and ideas of pupils.

RE is well led and managed by the deputy headteacher. This has led to high and consistent expectations for RE across the school. He works closely alongside the headteacher to develop his skills in church school leadership. A wide range of strong and effective partnerships enriches the educational experiences of all members of the school community. As well as contributing well to the worshipping life of the school, the Friday church coffee morning for parents makes them 'feel welcomed' by their local church. Messy Church and 'The Mix' (church activities offered by a group of local churches) are ways in which the church has successfully reached out to families through the school. The school takes an active part in community life in ways which pupils say that they value, including remembering those who have died in conflicts most recently. The Tenterden Rural Alliance, formed of local church and community schools, is effective in providing training for staff and enrichment opportunities for pupils. This has included training for RE moderation and assessment. Diocesan training and advice has also provided support for the school in its journey of improvement as a church school.

SIAMS report November 2016 Woodchurch CE primary (VC) school Woodchurch Ashford Kent TN26 3QJ