

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Horsley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Street, Horsley, Derbyshire. DE21 5BR

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Derby
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Derbyshire
Date of inspection	19 October 2017
Date of last inspection	1 October 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	VC primary 112830
Headteacher	Paul Leeson
Inspector's name and number	Louise Patterson (310)

School context

Horsley VC Primary School is a small school with 85 full time pupils on roll, taught in three mixed age classes. The school is a short distance from the church. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with additional needs and those supported by pupil premium are below average. Pupils are drawn from a wide area with very few from the village. The school has adequate outside space with a field available if needed. The headteacher has been in post for 14 years.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Horsley Voluntary Controlled Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- There is a distinctively Christian ethos within the school which is understood and can be articulated by the vast majority of stakeholders. This impacts positively on its provision and outcomes for the pupils.
- There are excellent relationships throughout the school which are based on Christian values. This results in a very caring and supportive learning environment.
- High quality collective worship, religious education (RE) and the strong relationship with the local parish form a solid foundation for the Christian life of the school.
- Pupils are confident, well-behaved and developing into well rounded individuals in the knowledge that they are loved by God.

Areas to improve

- Enable more pupils to be involved in the planning and delivery of worship to strengthen ownership.
- Increase pupil appreciation of diverse communities through links with other schools and visitors from a range of backgrounds.

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

The Christian ethos permeates all aspects and dimensions of the life of the school and is having a significant impact on all those involved in school life. Though the school's mission statement does not explicitly mention the Christian foundation of the school it is made clear in the aims. The idea of fulfilling potential in school, in life and in faith is lived out daily through the ethos, relationships and the treatment of every child as an individual, underpinned by Christian values. This results in pupils who are confident, well rounded and often quite spiritually aware individuals who are encouraged to be open minded. There is an emphasis on the personal, spiritual and academic growth of every child within the safe, loving and Christian environment provided by the school. Pupils of all ages are afforded a range of opportunities and responsibilities, both within the classroom and around school. This is enabling and encouraging them to be responsible and caring individuals with a real empathy towards other pupils but also with the wider village and church community. One of these opportunities is the Collective Worship Team, who are a mixed age group involved in worship at different levels.

The vast majority of pupils are able to articulate what it means for them to go to a church school, saying, 'God is in school because we can talk to Him whenever we want to', 'our school is a Christian school' and 'everybody is kind and if you feel sad there is always somebody to talk to'. When asked what would change if the school was no longer a church school pupils commented, 'it would be a much worse place' and 'all the things that make us us would be gone'. Even the younger pupils have an age-appropriate concept of the impact of the Christian foundation of the school. Pupils feel that they have a voice within the school and they say that their ideas are taken seriously and are often acted upon. Pupils were unanimous in that they feel very safe in school and there is always someone to go to if you need to and this contributes to the very good attendance. There are very high expectations for behaviour, care and love, with all staff acting as excellent role models both in the classroom and outside. This results in pupils who are very well behaved and have a very positive attitude towards school. They engage readily with all aspects of school life, including the academic and spiritual, and are keen to come to school.

Data can fluctuate due to the small number of pupils on roll but it generally indicates that outcomes for pupils are above national expectations. These positive outcomes are an indication of the highly effective support and nurture given to all pupils which is fundamental to the development of every child. There is a nurture group which enhances emotional well-being of some pupils effectively. The teachers and teaching assistants are clearly committed to the school as an academic and caring, inclusive school rooted firmly in Christian values. There is an emphasis placed on the personal growth of every child which means that pupils are developing into polite, confident and enthusiastic individuals. This is achieved through the priority placed on their academic progress but also their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The emphasis on the spiritual dimension has been enhanced recently with work undertaken on what spirituality means. The working group involved both staff and governors who looked carefully at the impact on pupils. Pupils commented, 'spirituality means being part of school and believing in God' and 'being relaxed in God's love'. The recently introduced indoor spiritual space is well and appropriately used. Each class also has a prayer space which pupils understand and use on a regular basis.

The development of global awareness through visits to a range of places of worship within RE is enabling pupils to gain a deeper understanding of a range of culturally diverse backgrounds. This area is in need of further strengthening to ensure pupils are given a wider world perspective.

RE is making a significant contribution to the school as a Christian community. It is not only enabling pupils to have a much deeper understanding of Christianity as a world religion, but also other world faiths. Pupils are being well equipped to question and make informed decisions about faith. The subject is making a positive contribution to the spiritual growth of pupils which is demonstrated in their ability to articulate difficult religious concepts such as the Trinity and write their own prayers. The introduction of the Understanding Christianity materials is enhancing the questioning styles and encouraging enquiry based learning. The headteacher and co-ordinator regularly review and evaluate the subject. The subject is being very well led by the co-ordinator.

The school is a distinctively Christian church school with pupils and staff benefitting from the impact of the Christian values underpinning every aspect of school life.

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

Worship occupies a central place in the life of the school and it reflects the school's Christian ethos. It is enabling both staff and pupils to develop a sense of community and Christian fellowship, with all staff in attendance. There are opportunities for the development of the spiritual dimension within worship with singing, prayer and periods of quiet reflection. The impact of these opportunities is evident in the way pupils and staff react positively to the worship on offer. The opportunities to take part in elements of worship are taken up with enthusiasm, with lots of volunteers who clearly have a good background knowledge and understanding. One pupil commented that they liked, 'the messages in the stories'. Pupils generally have an understanding that the teachings of Jesus and Christian values, which are discussed in worship, are to be lived out through their behaviour towards others and the choices they make. The impact of this is pupils who are considerate of others and make positive choices about their

behaviour. These values and teachings are regularly reinforced through the appropriate use of Bible stories. Pupils and staff are fully engaged in worship and clearly enjoy the experience. Prayer is a regular feature of the school day, with pupils having an understanding of what prayer is. Prayer is used within worship and also at lunchtime. Pupils enjoy opportunities to write their own prayers. There are opportunities for pupils to create and say prayers on the spot within worship, for fellow pupils, whose names are drawn on lollypop sticks at random. The co-ordinator of collective worship also co-ordinates RE. As part of her good development within the role she has introduced a long term structure based on the Values for Life resource. There have been developments and changes to the planning and delivery of worship as a result of feedback from pupils. The Worship Team has recently started to evaluate the worship. Though the Worship Team is effective, not enough pupils are involved in planning and delivery of worship. Children enjoy worship led by visitors. They said how much they enjoy going to church on Friday because 'it is a spiritual space' and 'you can sit and relax'. Church links are greatly enhanced by Mr Vallance, a member of the local church, who makes a significant contribution to the school as part of a Christian community. Links with the very busy local vicar have strengthened recently but this needs to continue to be enhanced. Major festivals are celebrated in church and parents greatly appreciate being involved in these experiences. This reciprocal relationship between the local parish and the school is a strength. This approach is widening the Christian experience for both pupils and staff.

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

The highly committed and capable Christian leadership and management of the headteacher and governors makes a significant contribution to the success of this outstanding church school. The school monitors and reviews its Christian distinctiveness with discussions in the full governing body with regular reference to the church self-evaluation document as a measure. This is enhanced by the feedback from governors on their regular visits into school. The results of the headteacher reports and governor monitoring visits enhance the knowledge and understanding of the Christian nature of the school and inform future developments in this area. Governors are effective, know the school very well and are acutely aware of their role as leaders of a church school. They take their role as leaders of a Christian community very seriously. Foundation governors have a clear and positive view of the school and their role within it. The school feels that it is well supported by the diocese and takes advantage of the training provided by them. This relationship with the local Christian community is having a significant impact on the Christian life of the school.

The Christian distinctiveness is effectively promoted through the website which gives a clear indication that the Christian foundation is central to the life of the school, stating that 'we pride ourselves upon being a happy, supportive school with a strong Christian Ethos where children can grow and learn'. Parents speak very highly of the school as a church school. They said such things as, 'Christianity is totally integrated into the school', 'the church is an extension of the school building' and 'I brought my child here because of the values which emanate from the school and because of the links with the church'. They say that they are kept well informed about their children and that they appreciate the 'open door' policy, especially the head teacher being readily available at the start and end of the day. They also appreciate being asked their opinions and that 'there are no surprises because the school knows every child very well'.

Though the staff team is small they are all fully committed to and enthusiastically support the Christian vision and ethos of the school. There is a real sense of all staff working very well together to enhance the educational experience being given to every child within a Christian framework.

There is a very effective and mutually supportive relationship with the local parish. There are many contacts both formal and informal, enabling pupils to have a clear understanding of the importance of the church in the life of their school. The vicar is becoming a more familiar figure and members of the congregation provide a positive presence which is appreciated by pupils, staff and parents.

The school has made progress in addressing the areas for development from the previous inspection. There is now more formal evidence-based evaluation of worship.

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