

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Chevening St Botolph's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	
Chevening Road, Chipstead, Sevenoaks, TN13 2SA	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Rochester
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local Authority	Kent
Date of inspection	30 November 2017
Date of last inspection	November 2017
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary - Voluntary Aided - 118715
Headteacher	Kathryn Taylor
Inspector's name and number	Pamela Draycott (161)

School context

This popular, one-form entry school serves pupils mainly from Christian families. Many of these are associated with the parish church of St Botolph, with whom the school has longstanding links. The vast majority of pupils are White British. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or for whom extra funding is received due to social or economic disadvantage is well below the national average. However, this has increased slightly recently. The current headteacher came into post in September 2016.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Chevening St Botolph's Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The school's Christian foundation is deeply embedded. Its values have been refreshed recently, in consultation with a range of adults and pupils. This means that they remain relevant and continue to sustain and drive forward developments as a church school.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent. They are clearly influenced by the school's vision of all children being unique and made in the image of God. There are strong and caring relationships in evidence across the school.
- The collective worship programme and religious education (RE) make effective contributions to the school's Christian ethos and values.
- The long-term relationship between the school and the church has a positive impact, providing mutual support and a meaningful sense of belonging.
- Prayer is offered regularly by both adults and pupils, who recognise its deep importance in supporting school life.

Areas to improve

- Embed recent changes to the RE curriculum and refine assessment practice in order to boost practice in RE to support ongoing developments.

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

The school has an explicit and ingrained Christian ethos which successfully underpins its pupils' academic and personal development. This is based on recognising the uniqueness of each individual as a child of God with different talents and gifts. It leads, for example, to effective academic monitoring and pastoral systems which place pupils' wellbeing at the heart of its life and work. Thus, pupils are well known and cared for across the school.

Consequently, attitudes to learning are very positive and behaviour is excellent. Pupils are confident in expressing their views and opinions, knowing that they will be listened to. Pupils feel happy in school which contributes to attendance being above the national average. On those few occasions when behaviour, attendance or attitudes get in the way of learning, the school works closely with the pupil and their family to support and bring about improvement. This is based on a clear focus on justice and forgiveness as a way of expressing Christian love and compassion. Attainment is above the national average, with the vast majority of pupils working at least at age related expectations and making at least good, if not accelerated, progress. There is a very small gap in attainment between those pupils who are both economically or social disadvantaged and have a special educational need and their peers. Also, the girls are tending to do slightly less well in mathematics and science subjects than are the boys. However, these pupils are still making good progress. The school has identified needs in both these groups and have put in place effective short and medium term strategies which are already beginning to close these small gaps.

The school's Christian values, reviewed recently, are identified as love, faith, respect, honesty, courage, compassion, forgiveness and perseverance. These are well known and acted upon by staff and pupils. As a Year 6 pupil reflected, 'God is love, Jesus is love and so we should show love to one another'. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is given a high priority within the curriculum and through the wide-ranging extra-curricular provision. For example, in RE, in worship and through the big question class books, pupils have opportunities to consider a broad range of spiritual, moral and ethical issues. In the 'big questions' class book for example, a Year 3 pupil asked, 'Why did God create scary animals?'. A Year 6 pupils pondered, 'What is normal if we are all unique?' Charitable giving is seen as an important way of showing Christian love in action. As a Year 5 pupil said, 'Giving to charity is important – it shows our value of compassion, helping others, just like Jesus did'. RE successfully encourages pupils to develop an appreciation of the difference and diversity in beliefs and practices across a range of faiths. These include Christianity, Judaism and Sikhism. This enhances pupils' knowledge and understanding and helps to prepare them well for life in Britain today. Pupils enjoy RE and find it interesting to learn about, '... Christianity and other religions. It's important so that we learn respect for God and for other people'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The daily worship programme, suitably extended by regular worship in the parish church, is widely and appropriately recognised as central to school life. It provides a variety of experiences through its different groupings, as well as through the different people, including pupils, who lead it. The programme is very well planned to include exploration of the school's values, key Christian festivals and the central teachings of Jesus. These are also closely linked to events in school life and in the wider world. Thus, through worship, pupils are developing an age-appropriate understanding of Jesus and his significance to Christians. They recognise the importance of the Bible and of key Christian beliefs and concepts. For example, pupils have a good appreciation of the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit: 'God who is the same but different – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit', as a Year 6 pupil said. A Year 4 pupil reflected, 'Jesus is God's Son so that makes him God. He loves the world and everyone in it'. Pupils are developing an appreciation of Anglican worship practices, which form a regular part of worship. This includes, for example, using opening and closing sentences with responses and lighted candles and an open Bible as focal points. Pupils and adults join in with worship and express appreciation of its significance to school life and how it reflects and supports the school's Christian ethos. 'Worship is important', a Year 4 pupil said, 'because it's good to be quiet and show respect to God and to each other'. Pupils are well engaged during worship time. They listen attentively and join in with singing and with prayers appropriately. Traditional hymns and Christian songs for children are enjoyed and help pupils celebrate Christian teaching well. Pupils are involved in leading worship confidently and respectfully. This periodically includes a class planning and leading an act of worship for another class. This is delivered either in the outside 'spiritual area' or in the library, depending on the weather. There are many ways that prayer is recognised as important. A Year 4 pupil said, 'Prayer is a way of having a relationship with God'. Pupils know and say the Lord's Prayer regularly and have a developing understanding of its importance to Christians. As a Year 3 pupil said, 'Jesus asked us to forgive others as we want to be forgiven'. The school prayer is in the process of being rewritten in the light of the recent review of the school's Christian values. Prayer and reflection areas are well used in classrooms. Many pupils are confident in writing prayers and some can confidently pray spontaneously. Parent prayer meetings happen weekly and the headteacher and parish priest pray together as part of their regular meeting. This leads to prayer permeating school life and means that many pupils and adults feel

its impact on their lives. The worship programme is monitored and evaluated closely by senior leaders and by the link governor. They draw on a wide range of responses from pupils and adults across the school community. Comments are taken seriously and lead to adaptations to worship as appropriate.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE has a very strong profile across the school and is rightly seen by adults and pupils alike as important in expressing the school's Christian ethos. Wide-ranging activities are planned, through a balance of work that addresses Christianity and other world faiths appropriately. To further pupils' learning, skills such as enquiry and interpretation are well focused on using different activities. Pupils are keen to give their own ideas and to talk confidently about their own beliefs within an open and respectful learning environment. Their understanding of Christianity is being deepened further through the implementation of a new, whole school approach to teaching. This is based on enquiring into different Christian concepts such as incarnation and resurrection in age-appropriate ways. The 'Understanding Christianity' approach has been recently introduced and, consequently, is not embedded practice. However, there is already evidence of its positive impact on learning during this implementation period. Both staff and pupils have responded enthusiastically to the approach and supporting resources. It is providing them with a range of activities that are impacting positively on both their attainment and progress in RE. Since the previous denominational inspection, there have been four changes to subject leadership. However, this has not impacted negatively on the quality of the pupils' experiences. This is indicative of the importance given to the subject and to pupils' learning in RE across the school. The current subject leader is new to having responsibility for RE but is an experienced teacher and subject leader. She is being very well supported by the school and is working closely with colleagues to ensure that smooth implementation of 'Understanding Christianity'. Developments in RE have been ongoing and are keeping pace with local and national development in RE as well as in education generally. In the light of these developments, assessment systems have been changed and are in the process of being refined further. Across the school, pupils' attainment in RE is broadly in line with standards in English. This means that pupils are attaining above national and local averages and that their progress is at least good, with pupils in each year group displaying work at great depth. Regular monitoring and evaluation of standards, teaching and progress feeds into the subject action plan very well. This is conducted by senior leaders, the RE subject leader and the link governor. Findings are used to positively contribute to identifying strengths and areas for improvement in order to ensure the ongoing development of the subject.

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

The school's Christian vision is shaped by its long history of service to its community. The headteacher has refreshed that vision with a focus on the uniqueness of the individual, created in the image of God. This is clearly shared by governors, senior leaders, other staff and many parents. It leads to a fitting focus on the academic and personal development needs of pupils. The school's evaluation of its distinctiveness and effectiveness as a church school is drawn together, building on the responses of a wide group of adults and pupils associated with the school. It is accurate and shows that senior leaders and governors have a deep understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Based on effective self-evaluation, clear action planning is in place to sustain successful practice and support continued development. RE and worship are given appropriate time and resources. Both areas meet statutory requirements. Regular staff training for RE and other aspects of working within a church school context promotes the professional development of staff very well. Parents are appropriately involved in school life and are kept well informed of their children's progress. They are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's work and of its Christian and prayerful underpinning. They recognise how the school values are important and impact positively on their children's behaviour and attitudes. Links with the parish church are longstanding and deep. The parish priest is regularly in school in his role as a governor and to lead worship. He knows pupils and their families well. The termly school Sunday service in church is well attended by many associated with the school. Pupils are fully involved in leading it. Through its partnership with the church and its involvement in visiting the local Cheshire home and a home for elderly residents, the school is rightly recognised as being a strong part of village life. The school draws appropriately on the expertise available through the diocese through, for example, attending governor and teacher training which has impacted well on developments in school.