

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### **Pyrford Church of England Primary Academy**

Pyrford Primary School, Coldharbour Road, Pyrford, Surrey GU22 8SP	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Guildford</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Surrey
Date of inspection	26 February 2018
Date of last inspection	March 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary Academy (VA equivalent) 140929
Headteacher	Kathryn Krynicki
Inspector's name and number	Virginia Corbyn 86

#### **School context**

Pyrford CE primary school serves the Surrey commuter belt town of Woking. It is a larger than average and oversubscribed primary school. The school converted to stand-alone academy status in June 2014. 23% of the pupils do not have English as a first language. The school receives pupil premium funding for 34 pupils. The school sits slightly below the national average for pupils with special educational needs. 59% of the school population is from the Christian faith, 20% from the Islamic faith, and 2% from the Hindu faith. The current Headteacher was appointed in September 2010. The school was judged as outstanding by OFSTED in January 2013. Pyrford is in the process of becoming a multi-academy trust (MAT) with the support of Guildford Diocese.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Pyrford Academy as a Church of England school are outstanding**

- A clear and strong Christian vision, shaped by its particular context, means that this school serves its diverse community exceptionally well.
- Loving relationships, based on trust and responsibility, form the basis for very good teaching and learning, as well as for pupils' wellbeing and personal development.
- Collective worship and religious education (RE) support the spiritual development of pupils very well so that they know how to reflect personally and that it is important to offer prayers for the world around them.
- All stakeholders are proud of the inclusiveness and openness of their school which is apparent through effective and dynamic links with its church, the local community and other schools, both locally and more widely.

#### **Areas to improve**

- Extend the opportunities for the whole community to offer prayer requests within the daily life of the school to deepen the understanding of the value of personal prayer as a basis for spiritual growth.
- Develop pupils' leadership of more aspects of collective worship on a regular basis to increase their ownership of this key part of the life of the school.
- Ensure consistency of expectations within RE across the whole school so that ultimate ('big') questions drive teaching and learning for all.

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

The school's vision is for, 'A distinctively Christian school at the heart of the community, striving for excellence in all areas of school life'. In its service of its diverse community, school leaders have ensured that this is an inclusive vision which is very well matched to its context. This means that pupil attainment and progress are high for all pupils and that specific needs are extremely well supported. A broad range of values, underpinned by biblical principles, underpins this vision. The values are understood by pupils and applied within their daily lives, particularly in relation to their interactions with others. They can speak of the ways in which they are currently using the values of respect, creativity and being positive in specific ways. However, the values are understood as having a wide ranging influence on daily life', 'Because we are a Christian school, they are a part of our personality', as one pupil commented. The recognition through awards of those who demonstrate the vision and values is important to pupils as it shows them how they are personally responsible for the success of their school. For parents of different faiths, the values of the school re-inforce those promoted at home and mean that the school is 'one big community, grounded in faith'.

Relationships, based primarily on trust and wanting the best for every child, lie at the heart of all that the school provides. These relationships are modelled very well by all members of staff. In turn, pupils can articulate what they need to do to take responsibility for themselves and for others. This means that behaviour is excellent and expectations are always very high. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is very strong. Spiritual development is nurtured carefully in the school. Pupils are able to use personal reflection across many areas of the curriculum. They are encouraged to explore some of the puzzling things that they see around them, for example in news stories. Praying together as a school is important especially in difficult times, for example when a member of staff died recently, and also at regular set times in the school day. However, there are limited opportunities for the offering of prayers which offer personal requests and which can deepen a personal understanding of prayer. Moral and social development is developed well, particularly through the exploration of a wide range of Christian values and those values shared by all faiths and none. Pupils and their families say that the school helps them to value difference and diversity. One parent said that, 'This is a place where it is OK to be different'. Another added that, 'Here, the understanding of other faiths is rooted in friendship'. For pupils, it is 'good to celebrate differences' within their RE lessons but this is also evident more broadly including within the planning for collective worship and for the wider curriculum.

## **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

Pupils enjoy and actively participate in daily collective worship in many different ways. They talk about 'learning from others and appreciating what they think' especially in class worship in their smaller groups. This is when they are able to understand more deeply how worship and its messages are important for them. Worship is inclusive of those faiths other than Christianity represented in the school. Their festivals are explored and related to Bible stories, where possible. This means that those of all faiths and of none are included and valued within all acts of worship. Pupils' roles include writing and sharing prayers, acting, singing and playing instruments, as well as providing practical support. However, pupils do not regularly prepare materials independently beyond the prayers in ways which mean that they have ownership of leading this aspect of the life of the school. Worship is a time for reflection but also includes consideration of ways in which pupils might actively help others which they do, for example, through charitable giving. 'Open the book' has been particularly successful in re-inforcing pupils' understanding of the Bible in ways which mean that they want to find out more. It also helps them to relate Biblical teaching to their own lives very well. Pupils are developing a good understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit from their RE lessons, and also through some prayers and responses in worship. Services in church mark major festivals of the Church's year and pupils are very involved in planning and participating within these services. Events such as the Easter and Christmas pause days help to deepen understanding of Christian festivals and to develop pupils spiritually. Visits to church for worship also support pupils' understanding of Anglican practices and they are familiar with some formal prayers, such as the Lord's Prayer. Links with the local church are very strong, especially in supporting the worshipping life of the school, through the relationship with the rector, the curate and the children and families minister. There is a range of leaders for worship, both within and from beyond the school. Worship is monitored and evaluated well by members of the governing body and by pupils, in order to maintain its effectiveness.

### **The effectiveness of religious education is outstanding**

RE teaching and learning is given a high profile within the school. It is very well resourced. The leadership and management of the subject is robust. The two subject leaders for the subject access training from the Diocese and this helps them to support teaching and learning in RE very well. Pupils' evidence and teachers' assessment over time demonstrates that RE standards are at least in line with national expectations, as described in the Guilford Diocesan syllabus, with a significant number of pupils attaining higher than this. However, variation of expectation in recording across the school sometimes limits pupils' opportunities to demonstrate the depth of their thinking and their learning in detail. Teacher subject knowledge is secure and is improving steadily as a result of using planning from the Diocese and through support from the subject leaders. Pupils make good progress over time. They understand that RE is about 'similarities and differences which we need to understand' across the faiths represented in the school and across the world. They also articulate how they are expected to think through their own ideas in their RE lessons and then explain them clearly to others, particularly expressing enjoyment of group work. They are encouraged to explain their ideas and justify their arguments. Upper Key Stage pupils were observed to be doing this by looking at unfamiliar Biblical texts in depth and thinking about the consequences of disobedience in these examples. Younger pupils were seen to be exploring symbolism in Judaism in interactive ways, which helped them to remember the details of the story of the Passover. Pupils across the Key Stages can use a range of religious vocabulary confidently. Teachers hold regular dialogues with them by asking questions through their marking, to which pupils personally respond. This helps to meet the individual needs of pupils, especially by extending the thinking of the more able, and to develop their spiritual thinking. Monitoring by the trust board (formerly the Governing Body) includes learning walks, work sampling and discussions with pupils, giving them a clear picture of RE across the school. This helps them to ensure that support is provided when and where it is needed for the subject.

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

The aspirational and clear Christian vision of the headteacher and other school leaders ensures excellent outcomes for pupils. By setting expectations of nothing less than excellent for teaching and learning, the whole staff team ensure that pupils and staff achieve the best that they can. This vision was maintained and strengthened throughout the building of the new school recently. The development of very positive relationships at all levels leads to excellent behaviour for learning and excellent attitudes of children towards each other. By constantly re-assessing the Christian values which underpin the work of the school, leaders are able to adapt to changes rapidly and keep expectations high. Inclusion is very important in ensuring that all members of this diverse school community can access all that is on offer, both within and beyond the curriculum. Additional needs are very well met, through both practical and spiritual support. Christian distinctiveness and inclusiveness are well balanced in both policy and practice. The school meets statutory requirements for RE and for collective worship. The recommendations of the previous denominational inspection have been well addressed. The school has clear plans for developing the school as a church school into the future, including through the formation of a multi-academy trust following a voluntary aided model.

Staff members feel nurtured and cared for, both professionally and personally. They describe a number of ways in which pastoral support had been provided, including through prayer and through a tangible sense that people always come first in school. Professionally, staff members are encouraged to be actively involved in the life of the school as a church school and are well supported in improving their practice. An attitude which supports, yet challenges, all staff means that succession planning is seen as a natural part of the development of all members of the school team. Links with the local church are described as 'deep and vibrant' by a range of stakeholders. The rector, supported by his staff team and others in the church community, presents the Christian story in ways which resonate within the diverse local community. Practical examples of this include the weekly 'open the book' assembly and the after-school prayer group. This means that parents are able to see 'faith as part of life' within the school, as one Muslim parent observed. Another said that, 'we see grace when things go wrong or are difficult'. It is by speaking gently and appropriately that the local church has enabled the wider community to engage closely with the church and its school. A good example of this is the way in which school and church members shared together in the breaking of the fast with the Muslim community at the local mosque. Support for and collaboration with other schools both locally and nationally and with the Diocese is also strong, providing mutual benefits and living out the school's vision and values more widely.

