

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Peter's Church of England Aided Junior School	
Church Avenue, Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 7AP	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Satisfactory
Diocese	Guildford
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Hampshire
Date/s of inspection	21 June 2017
Date of last inspection	27 April 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	116388
Headteacher	Alison Good
Inspector's name and number	Marcia Headon 761

School context

St Peter's is a larger than average junior school with 252 pupils on roll aged 7 to 11. The majority are of White British heritage and few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average as is the proportion eligible for additional funding. Since the previous inspection both the headteacher and deputy are new and there have been several changes to the teaching and non-teaching staff. A new chair of governors was appointed in 2016. An Ofsted inspection in March 2017 judged the school to require improvement.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Peter's as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- The distinctively Christian character of the school is being carefully reconsidered by senior leaders and governors, but it is not yet apparent in all areas of the school's life.
- The strengthened partnership between the school and St Peter's church is having a positive impact upon pupils' well-being.
- All members of the community value collective worship as a meaningful part of the school day.

Areas to improve

- Extend pupils' involvement in the planning and delivery of worship in order to further their spiritual development.
- Develop systematic self-evaluation of church-school distinctiveness, involving both school leaders and governors, steered by the school's vision, trust deed and Christian values.
- Improve the opportunities within religious education lessons (RE) for pupils to analyse, discuss and debate what they learn from religion as well as what they learn about religion.

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

Pupils know the revised Christian values of the school of truth, service, respect, celebration, collaboration and responsibility as they have been incorporated into the school rules and pupils know they are expected to follow them. The school rewards pupils who follow the rules and hence live out the values with points which lead to prizes. Older pupils say the values are important to them, 'as it is the way the school is built'. They consider the values guide them to make the right choices not only in school but in the wider community. For example, they can explain that 'respect the environment and serve others' reminds them to pick up litter and to be helpful. A further example of their impact is that on a recent residential visit, some older pupils found some money on a train. Without further thought they took it to the teacher who suggested it may have fallen from the pocket of another traveller. When asked, the passenger commended the pupils for their truthfulness. However, younger pupils are not clear how the values make a difference to their lives and they do not relate them to the teachings of Jesus. They find it difficult to associate the values with the Biblical texts, which the school has chosen and, in trying to remember the wordings of the texts, they lose the purpose of the values. When the values were revised the pupils were not involved. As a result, not all pupils identify with the values as much as they could. The values make a contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development. However, they are not explicit in curriculum planning. They do not currently drive all the policies within the school. There is no agreed definition of spirituality amongst school leaders. The curriculum has not been mapped to identify where opportunities exist to develop this. This results in reduced opportunities for spiritual reflection across the curriculum and staff are unaware of the extent of pupils' spiritual development.

The school is an inclusive and compassionate community which seeks to help the more vulnerable. Part-time provision has been organised for children with medical needs and additional support is given to those who need help. Relationships within the school are good and pupils know that if they have problems there is always someone to turn to. Behaviour is generally good although pupils report that at times some pupils are not kind to others. Pupils are aware of the needs of others and have raised substantial sums for Mental Health UK and Young Carers in Hampshire. In 2016 pupils did not consistently make good progress across the school and it was below that made nationally. Able and disadvantaged pupils were not making enough progress. Although since that time the school has acted to improve provision, it anticipates that while attainment will improve in 2017, progress will still be below national averages. Attendance is broadly average but it is not increasing rapidly enough. Pupils show a limited understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith, although they show tolerance to those of other faiths and none.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is a central element of the school day and is valued by pupils as a time when they meet together to listen to Bible stories. Older pupils talk with confidence about the messages given being relevant to their lives. One collective act of worship, which came after recent terrorist attacks, made a very strong impression as pupils talked of the need to ensure hate did not take over and that tolerance was needed by all. Collective worship makes a good contribution to children's spiritual and moral development. Staff value it as a time for reflection. The planning of collective worship, which is undertaken by the local church children's minister, is thorough. The clergy, along with the headteacher and, on occasions, other school staff play a key role in the delivery of worship. It is distinctively Christian and always includes a Bible reading, a prayer and time for reflection. Over the course of a year pupils are told stories from the Old Testament, the life of Jesus and from the Acts of the Apostles. This develops their Biblical knowledge. The revised school values have recently been incorporated to form the theme of the week. Children respond well to an opening Christian greeting and answer eagerly when questions are posed. They sing enthusiastically. They particularly like worship in the local church which is held at the beginning of the year for a welcome service, at Harvest, on Remembrance Day, at Christmas and Easter and at the end of the year. At these services pupils are involved in leading worship. For example, at Christmas individual pupils read from reflections which they had written on the meaning of the birth of Jesus.

However, pupils are not yet involved in planning worship or in leading worship in school collective worship. Celebration assemblies, which are held weekly, have a time of prayer and pupils make a ready link between these events and the school value of celebration. The use of prayer is developing in the school. As well as in collective worship it takes place at lunch time but there is inconsistency in the use of prayer at the end of the day. Reflective spaces in classrooms are not being used effectively. Children are encouraged to write prayers for the church services and parents consider these are often very moving. The school has a prayer box and the prayers from this are taken to a small group that meets monthly. However, there is no arrangement for children who wish their prayers to be private and not read in church. Foundation governors have begun to evaluate collective worship. They feedback comments on worship to individual members of staff, but there is no overall summation of their findings and the evaluation of the impact of worship is underdeveloped.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

Pupils enjoy religious education and particularly like the wider variety of activities which have more recently been introduced into lessons, for example making Christingles, sequencing cards or drawing artefacts. Standards and achievement in RE are in line with core subjects, but below national expectations. Pupils make progress but teachers do not always use the outcomes of assessment to inform future planning. As a result, work is not always well enough matched to the abilities of pupils. The school has developed its assessment policy since the previous inspection but it has not yet moderated work with other schools and so cannot be entirely confident in its judgements.

The school follows the Guildford Religious Education Diocesan Guidelines covering the compulsory modules and including some additional units. There is sufficient coverage of faiths other than Christianity. Pupils demonstrate a sound knowledge of the facts about religions and can recall events in the life of Jesus or Old Testament stories or details of other religions. They are able to make comparisons between other faiths and Christianity. However, there is not enough balance between pupils' learning about religions and pupil discussion and debate about what they learn from religion. As in the previous inspection, there is still not enough opportunity for them to explore concepts in RE in greater depth. This means that not all pupils are regularly challenged to engage with deeper thinking and spirituality through enquiry and reflection. The quality of teaching is also inconsistent and at times questioning is too superficial. However, in a year 4 class pupils were challenged most effectively to discuss and explain why Jesus might be considered to be a super hero. This gave the pupils the opportunity to draw on previous learning about miracles. Although some teachers make explicit links between the school's values and topics in RE, this is not a routine part in planning. Year 6 pupils easily make connections between the school's Christian value of service and its importance to a Buddhist.

The RE leader, who is relatively new in post, is highly enthusiastic and is working very conscientiously to develop teaching in the subject. She has taken her responsibilities very seriously and has sought advice and training from the Diocese. She has prepared long term plans for the subject and is helping class teachers to develop short term plans and with a foundation governor, is beginning to monitor the quality of teaching and learning more closely.

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

The headteacher is committed to taking the school forward and expresses the vision that the school should show the love of God in all that it does. She has begun to make the Christian ethos more explicit with the most recent revision of the values, but this is not yet embedded in all aspects of school life. School policies are not always driven by the values. The headteacher knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school, but has not yet conducted a detailed enough analysis of the impact of the Christian ethos. Consequently, strategic planning is underdeveloped and there is little reference to Christian distinctiveness in the school improvement plan. The school is developing future leaders of church schools, for example by providing training opportunities for the new RE leader. She is beginning to have an impact, but it is too soon for her to have been able to make a significant difference.

Links with St Peter's Church have been strengthened considerably. The rector, other clergy and members of the congregation play an active role in the life of the school. As well as the rector and children's minister leading worship, members provide practical support on events such as sports day and residential trips and some help by hearing reading. They recently helped to facilitate a Prayer Spaces event in the church, based around the school's values. This was greatly appreciated by the pupils who enjoyed the activities provided and some gained a greater depth of understanding of the meaning of the school's values. The headteacher spoke in church on Education Sunday and the church prays regularly for events in the school.

The foundation governors are fully committed to the development of the school. They are regular visitors. They are supportive of the headteacher and commend the way she lives out the values and the openness with which she discusses the school with them. They have taken their training seriously and the vast majority have attended courses run by the Diocese. At the current time they have not undertaken an audit of the church-school distinctiveness and are less certain of its impact, including that upon pupil progress.

Parents are very supportive of the school, the newly revised values and the links with the local church.

The school meets statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.