



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Potters Gate Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	Potters Gate Farnham Surrey GU9 7BB
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Guildford
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Outstanding
Local authority	Surrey
Date of inspection	6 October 2016
Date of last inspection	29 June 2011
School's unique reference number	125161
Headteacher	Jayne Venables
Inspector's name and number	David Hatrey 844

School context

Potters Gate school is a larger than average primary school. The school is expanding to accommodate two forms of entry. It is set in the centre of Farnham. The number of children who are eligible for pupil premium support and/or who have English as an additional language is below national averages. The number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Potters Gate Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School as a Church of England school is good.

- The school's Christian distinctiveness and inclusiveness is clearly evidenced in the care and support provided for children and families.
- Children have a good understanding of prayer and know this is a way of sharing with God.
- The newly established leadership team is ambitious, creating a clear vision for the school as a church school, based firmly upon Christian values and virtues.
- Children form good relationships with one another and staff and show concern for each other and are beginning to attribute this to the Christian values.

Areas to improve

- Embed the new whole school approach to spirituality so children have high quality opportunities to develop a personal spirituality.
- Enable children to plan, lead and evaluate worship regularly so they develop real ownership in this area.
- Establish a rigorous system of monitoring involving all members of the school community to ensure the on-going evaluation of all aspects of the school's Christian distinctiveness.

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

Seven core distinct Christian values are at the heart of the life and work of the school. These are: collaboration, contentment, humility, determination, respect, responsibility and courage. A growing understanding of these values is demonstrated by children. They can talk about stories which illuminate the meaning of the values and relate these to Bible stories.

There is some confusion where stories do not always match the value they are sharing. Children confidently say values come from the Bible and Jesus' teaching, "they show us how God would want us to live." They are also beginning to identify these values in the acts of others. On a Monday, a particular aspect of a value explored in worship becomes the focus for the week. By Friday children have the opportunity to nominate a peer for a values award, reasoning why they have done so. This high profile of values means children respond enthusiastically. Many are able to give examples of how this is beginning to influence their thoughts and actions. Staff model these values in their daily interactions thereby creating rich relationships. Children respond to staff very well and recognise the contribution they make to their lives. The core Christian values were recently reviewed by the new leadership, the children's faith team, staff and governors. Values have for example been effectively used to raise standards of behaviour, where significant improvements are evident. Children show concern for others through daily actions. Children do well academically, make good progress and attain standards which are at least in-line with national expectations. A new approach to developing spirituality was launched this term. This is helping children to identify opportunities in lessons to explore a spiritual dimension to learning, particularly in RE. One of the worship sessions is a "thoughtful time" where a reflective atmosphere provides opportunities to consider thought provoking questions or an issue related to core values. There is some evidence of children beginning to explore ideas and show deeper insights. The importance of religious education (RE) has been re-established. Increasingly RE develops children's understanding of values with an emphasis on collaboration and responsibility as skills to use as part of their learning. Children are seeing the relevance of these values to their learning. Further, there are opportunities to reflect on religious questions and the impact of this is growing. Good practice was evident in these areas but needs to be distributed across the school. Children's understanding of other faiths is good. A central emphasis is on tolerance and respect for those who hold different views. There is a growing awareness of the diverse nature of British society and other faiths and provision for spiritual, moral and cultural development is strong.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The importance and centrality of worship in the life of the school has been re-affirmed. Planning for worship now actively develops children's understanding of Christian values. An aspect of a core Christian value is explored in depth each week. Children experience a variety of approaches to worship, in church, whole school or class based, led by church members or staff. Worship draws upon biblical stories, Jesus' teaching and other stories, with children showing a growing understanding of Jesus' significance for Christian worship. The use of media and drama helps children to remember and draw upon these stories in their learning. Children's understanding of the Trinity is developing and they have some appreciation of the nature of the Trinity. Main Christian festivals are celebrated, often in church. The children's worship team with members from all classes, makes positive contributions to planning and leading. They gather ideas from other class members. Children have a good understanding of these festivals and can explain their significance. Most recognise the importance of worship and value it as a time to be still as part of the school family. Some explain that teaching from worship influences their thinking and actions. Children have a mature understanding of prayer which is well taught. Younger children write short thank you or asking prayers. Older children consider the meaning of the Lord's Prayer and use these ideas to inform their own prayers. They understand prayer as an opportunity to share with God. Prayer spaces in each class enable them to use prayer outside of worship, with many understanding the contribution it can make to their lives. Monitoring and evaluation of worship is rigorously undertaken by foundation governors through discussion with children. They share their findings with the adult faith team and governing body. This has resulted in improvements to worship,

for example, age related worship in classes and worship being more interactive. At present children are not involved in planning, leading or evaluating worship which would give them a greater sense of ownership.

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

The new leadership team is passionate about creating a vibrant church school and it's continuing development. They are dedicated to creating a strong cohesive staff team. The renewed Christian vision based upon core Christian values underpins the approach of the school in all it does. This vision is shared by staff and governors alike. Christian distinctiveness is particularly evident in the extensive service and support it provides to parents and disadvantaged children, such as nurture for young carers who themselves support their families. The school's numerous support projects and interventions are effective in meeting a diverse range of needs of both children and parents. Some children volunteer to become part of these groups to act as role models and nurture self esteem. This is a real strength of the school. Governors are conscientious in their role, knowledgeable about the school's performance and involved in many aspects of monitoring. Currently this does not include evaluating all aspects of Christian distinctiveness, the provision for spirituality and the impact on children's lives. Therefore, whilst the faith team have made some developments, these are not yet informed by the current situation. Strong mutual relationships are established with the church. In the absence of a vicar, church members have made a major contribution to these links through leading worship and in practical ways. The school draws effectively on diocesan resources in developing RE, supporting leadership and planning the delivery of key initiatives such as spirituality. Parents praise the school's care for their children and the openness of staff, "they are always there to listen and share with us." This is an ambitious school making good progress. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report October 2016 Potters Gate Church of England V C Primary School Farnham GU9 7BB