

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

### St Lawrence Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Bagshot Road  
Chobham  
Surrey  
GU24 8AB

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Guildford</b>
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Surrey
Date of inspection	21 November 2016
Date of last inspection	29 November 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 125168
Headteacher	Debbie Cottrell
Inspector's name and number	Andrew Rickett 201

#### School context

St Lawrence is smaller than the average size primary school with 202 children in roll. The majority of children are of White British heritage and come from mixed socio-economic backgrounds. The number of children with learning needs and/or disabilities is below the national average as is the number entitled to receive the pupil premium. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. There have been significant changes to staffing since 2014 including a new leadership team. Two new classrooms and other facilities have recently been built.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Lawrence School as a Church of England school are good

- Children enjoy talking about matters of faith and belief and do so with confidence knowing that their views will be listened to with respect.
- Children have a good understanding of the meaning of prayer which they use to help them develop their ability to reflect at a personal level.
- The headteacher, supported by other leaders including governors, ensures that the Christian vision is developing in such a way that it has purpose and meaning for all members of the school community.

#### Areas to improve

- Develop a shared understanding of spirituality across the whole school community so that opportunities to engage in high quality spiritual experiences can be identified in all aspects of school life.
- Develop the children's ability to respond to these opportunities for spiritual development by equipping them with the language to express their opinions in greater depth and to ask questions of meaning and purpose.
- Develop children's role in collective worship by giving them greater opportunities to explore worship themes in ways that interest them.

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

The process of identifying eight core values, and how they are embedded, gave an opportunity to revisit what it means to be a church school. The school is in the process of developing their understanding of what these values mean to them and the extent to which they make an impact on the children's wellbeing and learning. Progress towards achieving this has been impressive and children have considerable ability to explain values already covered such as love, courage and community. Moreover, they are able to make links between these values and give reasoned arguments to support their thoughts. This has been mainly achieved through the collective worship programme and is becoming increasingly integral to the children's learning in the classroom. In lessons such as religious education (RE), teachers are becoming more aware of the opportunities to use the values to enhance the children's learning. For example, children are beginning to use their understanding of trust and forgiveness to help explore their understanding of love. This has not yet been fully developed but, where children are given opportunities to challenge their thinking, they respond with excitement and enthusiasm. They understand that the values are part of what makes the school a distinctive church school as there are links to Bible stories which contain messages from Jesus' teaching about how to live their lives. The quality of relationships throughout the school is based on the school's values where children show kindness and consideration towards each other and adults care for the children. This helps to create an environment in which children are at ease and make good progress in their learning to attain standards that are broadly in line with national expectations. Children have opportunities to be still and reflect during the school day using reflection areas in classrooms and other spaces such as the chapel. There are other times in classrooms for children to consider moments of wonder. However, there isn't a clearly defined interpretation of what spirituality means that is shared by children and adults. Therefore identifying moments for spiritual experiences in the school day are not always noticed and explored as much as they might. The commitment of staff is shown in the contribution of the site manager who has created a striking values tree on which leaves are placed that celebrate children who have lived out the school's values.

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

Collective worship has improved because its planning is more focussed on promoting the school's core values with explicit links to Bible stories. The worship programme includes a broad range of themes that includes events in the church year and the celebration of festivals such as Easter and Christmas. There are also opportunities for children to hear about festivals from other faiths and how they too support the school's values. Acts of worship are therefore distinctively Christian but inclusive as they recognise that the core values are relevant to everyone regardless of background. This is an aspect of the school's Christian ethos that is appreciated by parents and seen as a natural part of worship. Children respond well when asked questions in worship and are attentive and engaged. There is willingness to participate and appropriate reverence when the school prays together knowing that although not everyone may pray, they need to show respect for those who do. Children, whether they have a faith or not, have a good understanding of the purpose of prayer and are equally confident to share their views. Younger children understand that prayers are a way of saying thank you to God for food and cakes. They explain that God created the world which grows the food which we make into cakes. They also know that they can say sorry to God and that He will forgive them if they 'mean it'. Children are exploring their understanding of the nature of the Trinity and recognise that its complexity 'can be confusing'. They are at ease to debate whether, if you upset someone, you ought to say sorry first to God or the person you have upset and which is the more important? Children were unanimous in their belief that God would want you to say sorry to the person first because 'He created them and loves them'. Children have a wonderful openness and maturity in expressing their views about prayer. The school is beginning to develop class based acts of worship in which children have more involvement. This is an area that has been identified in school improvement planning. Children already have opportunities in Key Stage acts of worship to hear messages at an age appropriate level but there are fewer times for them to explore worship themes in greater depth in ways that interest them. The evaluation of worship has become more systematic since September 2016 with feedback from year groups and involvement of governors in observations.

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

Standards in RE are similar to other core subjects in the curriculum and reflect national expectations according their age. They make good overall progress in RE to attain these standards. The scheme of work is based on the revised Diocesan RE syllabus and is in the process of embedding the guidelines from 2015. The school follows this closely to deliver a balanced curriculum that covers Christianity and other major world religions. Children have a good knowledge and in their learning make links between different religions which enhances their understanding. It also develops their appreciation of other faiths and cultures and their respect for them. Teachers adapt the units so that they provide cross curricular links where these are meaningful. For example, older children, learning about Islam, incorporated artwork and a visit to a local gallery to see examples of Islamic art. Teaching is secure and supports

the majority of children in meeting lessons objectives making progress towards the expected outcomes. Children respond well and are engaged and attentive. They listen with respect to the views of others and are confident to express their own opinions in an environment which encourages them to explore. There are times when opportunities to enhance learning beyond the limits of the lesson objective are not fully explored and the potential to deepen their understanding is not fulfilled. This is particularly the case when using these moments to develop the children's personal spirituality. However, when children are given the opportunity to think more deeply, and challenged with difficult questions, they respond with eagerness and the enjoyment of exploring how to put their thoughts into words. As the revised RE guidelines are introduced, so teachers are evaluating and adapting plans and assessment. The school has started to gather samples of children's work, either written or in some other form, and use these to moderate progress and attainment so that there is a growing consistency across the school. Capturing the children's comments, and celebrating them, is an area that the school is still trying to find the most effective way to do.

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

The headteacher has ensured that the school's Christian vision is constantly developing to meet the needs of the changing circumstances of the school. The school has a strong vision that reflects its Christian foundation and this is an established and central part of the school's ethos. With the large number of new staff, the headteacher revisited the vision in autumn 2015 and again in January 2016. The outcome of this was the set of eight core values identified to support the Christian vision. The headteacher is committed to the school's Christian ethos and the need for it to be constantly revisited so that it remains fresh and meaningful to all members of the school community. This is appreciated by children and parents who say that the values help their children to understand how to treat others and live according to a moral code. The school is in the process of developing their understanding of all of the eight values and linking them to the children's wellbeing and their learning. Governors are fully involved in the development of the Christian ethos and have a good understanding of what the school does well and what it needs to do to continue to improve. Governors have undertaken some strategic monitoring of collective worship and receive progress reports on RE which are scrutinised by the curriculum and standards committee. The current action plan for worship has accurately identified priorities to improve provision that includes greater involvement of children in planning and leading them. Self-evaluation is therefore accurate and based on a secure understanding of what it means to be a church school and the expectations of the current inspection criteria. Leaders have a good capacity to continue to improve as a church school. As this happens, governors appreciate the need to develop their skills in monitoring and evaluation. Relationships with the local church are strong and the vicar makes an important contribution to the life of the school. He leads an act of worship regularly and serves on the governing body. Children say that the vicar and the church are important aspects of what it means to them to be a church school. They and their parents say that the celebrations of major Christian festivals at the church are times they look forward to as they reflect the school's ethos. The RE subject leader has ensured that the subject is a valued part of the curriculum and that it responds to the latest local and national initiatives. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship and both policies are up to date.

SIAMS report November 2016 St Lawrence CE VA Primary School Chobham GU24 8AB