

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

The Chandler CE (VA) Junior School	
Middlemarch, Roke Lane, Witley, Godalming, Surrey, GU9 5PB	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Guildford
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Satisfactory
Local authority	Surrey
Date of inspection	19 January 2018
Date of last inspection	14 January 2015
Type of school and unique reference number	125200
Headteacher	Hugh Rawson
Inspector's name and number	Dr Trevor Walker (NSIN 908)

School context

The Chandler is a larger than average primary-phased school for pupils aged 7-11. The proportion of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds is below the national average. The number of those receiving special educational needs (SEN) support has recently increased and the proportion is now above the national average. The majority of pupils are of White British origin. The school has strong and established links with two parishes: All Saints, Witley and St. John's, Milford. Since the last inspection there have been significant staff changes and a new leadership team is in place. The school was inspected by Ofsted June 2017 and judged to be good. This followed two previous inspections when it required improvement.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of The Chandler as a Church of England school are good

- Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in developing a clearer understanding of what it means to be a church school.
- Christian character shapes the personal development and the academic achievements of the children.
- Collective worship is an important part of the life of the school community and pupils develop a deeper understanding of the Christian faith.
- There is a close and productive partnership with the parish churches and their clergy.

Areas to improve

- Review the range and application of the school's Christian values so that pupils have a deeper understanding of their Christian underpinning.
- Ensure that spirituality has a shared definition and that opportunities for its development and progression are mapped through the course of the curriculum.
- Strengthen pupils' involvement in leading collective worship so that their understanding and ownership of the worship increases.
- Raise standards in religious education (RE) through ensuring that there is sufficient coverage of the curriculum and that the standard of pupils' work in the subject is at least in line with that in the other core subjects.

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

The Chandler has improved in all areas since the last inspection, living out its vision of being 'child-centred and Christ-centred'. This is an inclusive school, as demonstrated, for example, through its admission and behaviour policies. Christian character effectively shapes the personal development and the academic achievements of the children. One governor said that every child matters, and teachers believing this to be so, means that every child develops self-belief; and this accords with the evidence of this inspection. Chosen values now make a much greater contribution to the Christian distinctiveness of the school, especially in terms of behaviour and relationships. Behaviour is good and relationships are positive and strong. There is a calm and orderly learning environment where pupils listen respectfully and learn to appreciate each other's contributions. Pupils understand how values such as trust and courage can be related to their learning and experience in school and, according to their parents, at home. Nevertheless, pupils are not always as able to link them to a Christian understanding and biblical narrative. Few can readily recall the full set of the 22 values that the school has chosen.

There has been considerable improvement in pupil outcomes since the last inspection. Across the Key Stage, progress is in line with national averages overall and for current pupils, including the disadvantaged, the rate of progress is increasing. The results at the end of the last school year showed that pupils' attainment was above the national average in the core subjects of reading, writing and mathematics. Attendance is high and exclusions are low. The school has taken decisive and successful steps to improve this outcome to its current level. Successful determination has helped to develop the breadth and richness of the curriculum and physical education (PE) and sport are particular strengths. There is a current focus on the performing arts, especially in music. Pupils enjoy RE and the subject is beginning to make an increasing contribution to their religious understandings. Christian character contributes to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) provision. The school has adopted the strategy of 'philosophy for children' (P4C) and this approach is encouraging deeper questioning and exploration within lessons. In the recent Ofsted inspection, teaching was judged to be good overall. Nevertheless, spirituality needs a sharper and shared definition and a clear focus on progression through the curriculum. Pupils are beginning to understand their place in the world through actively supporting their chosen charities and through gaining a growing sense of social justice. The school supports two specific charities and gets involved in national fundraising events. One of these is The Child of Hope School in Uganda and pupils spoke with enthusiasm about this connection. Pupils' appreciation of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith is not so well developed.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is an important part of the life of the school community and it occupies an appropriate amount of time in each school day. Pupils enjoy these occasions and the worship makes an important contribution in helping them to develop a deeper understanding of the Christian faith. On the day of the inspection, pupils and adults gathered with an evident sense of anticipation and purpose. On their entering the hall, the headteacher gently played his guitar and the tune, known by the children, was spontaneously picked up as they quietly joined in by humming the melodic line. Acts of worship are distinctively Christian and this was evidenced when the pupils were chosen to act the characters in a biblical story of Samuel and Eli.

Across the week, the worship is structured to include both whole school and class-based occasions. The class-led assemblies provide the pupils with opportunities to lead an occasion that showcases their work and talents. Older pupils are generally encouraged to exercise leadership in many aspects of their school life, but more could be done to routinely involve them in leading aspects of the whole-school worship. However, planning over-time needs to be strengthened so that it more effectively draws upon the cycle of the values and embeds a deeper understanding of the pattern of Christian festivals. While some pupils could say that this is the season of Epiphany, they were less sure of its meaning for Christians. Different members of staff, as well as the clergy, are involved in leading the worship. There is a termly Eucharist and this helps pupils to better understand Anglican traditions, although pupils indicated that they did not find the current form to be accessible and relevant. Pupils are reported to value the visits of local clergy. On the day of the inspection, the local curate, and chair of governors, read a collation of very moving prayers that had been deposited in the prayer box. One governor, also a local curate reported that the children had engaged in an animated discussion of the symbolism of the cross on a recent church visit that he had accompanied.

There are opportunities to pray within collective worship and on other occasions across the school. Some, such as the Lord's Prayer, are learnt from memory. Prayer spaces in classrooms have recently been established for pausing and reflection. A prayer box for the use of the whole school has also been introduced and this already has proved to have had a positive impact. The school has identified a need for more inspiring prayer spaces around the school and the grounds in order to further extend pupils' understanding of the challenge of prayer. An Easter

Pause Day is held each year and this gives an opportunity for learning about the Easter festival and its message of hope. A school worship group has been recently been established and this group is developing its role, including that of evaluation and feedback.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

The school follows the Guildford Guidelines for RE and diocesan support has been effectively used in implementing an increased understanding for embedding the units of work. RE is regarded as a core subject within the school and the long-term planning indicates that an appropriate amount of time is given to studying faiths other than Christianity – Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. Nevertheless, standards of achievement in the subject are not as high as they are in the other core subjects of reading, writing and mathematics. The evidence from pupils' work, as well as conversations on the day, demonstrate insufficient coverage and more needs to be done to ensure that standards are consistently in line with those that could be expected from other pupils of a similar age. Presentation is not always as good as it could be and there is too much reliance on worksheets and photographs that could better be included as part of a class folder of work. The quality of teaching in the subject is not yet consistently good. In the lessons seen, there were indications that the school's focus on P4C was increasing the exploratory nature of the learning; for example, where pupils were comparing Hindu creation stories with the Biblical account. In another class, pupils were focusing on the practice of Christian baptism after having visited an Anglican and a Baptist church and spoken with their respective religious leaders. However, a review of completed work from across the school indicated that pupils were not always working at their respective points of challenge, especially the more able, despite the use of approaches such as the 'chilli-challenge'. Books are regularly marked although, in much of the work seen, feedback is not yet sufficiently helpful in enabling pupils to progress.

The RE leader has successfully implemented the requirement for a statutory curriculum for RE that provides a good basis for breadth and progression. Currently he is leading developments on assessment and this has been the focus of recent whole-school professional development. There are productive links with local churches and pupils have opportunities to learn about the practice of Christian sacraments such as weddings and baptisms through drama and role-play. Pupils were recently involved in producing and providing model angels for the cathedral as part of a diocesan collaborative initiative. In undertaking this project they learnt about angels and their representation in the Bible. However, there are currently no opportunities for pupils to visit the special places where other religions worship, such as temples and synagogues, and wherever practical, this should be considered.

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

Leaders and governors have appropriately addressed the points for development from the last inspection and made good progress in developing a clearer understanding of what it means to be a church school. The headteacher aims to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to be all that they can be within a context of a distinctive Christian ethos. In this he has successfully and decisively led the school towards this ambition and he is well placed to take the community forward to its next stage of development. Self-evaluation is realistic and senior leaders have rightly identified actions, some of which have already been completed and some of which need to be carried out in the future. There is a clear and ambitious five-year vision in place and, in this, the Christian element is clearly expressed through the school's 'motto' of: 'Every light shining'.

The governing body has undergone significant restructuring since the last inspection whilst continuing to reflect the community and the parishes. Governors have a good understanding of the elements of the Christian character of the school. Their monitoring and evaluation provides a basis on which they are able to pose searching questions about implementation and practice. The school development plan for the current school year incorporates the further development of the school's Christian foundation. Members of the governing body are currently involved in checking the progress and impact of the plan. There is an appropriate intention to review the range and application of the school's Christian values. This will explore the impact of the values on pupils' experiences and achievements as they progress through the school. Links with the clergy of both parishes is close and productive. They have become a very familiar and welcome presence in the school, leading collective worship, providing pastoral support and acting as a resource for RE. Locally, the school is a part of a network of self-supporting schools known as the Godalming Confederation. Parents, as found by Ofsted, are fully supportive of the school and this too was the evidence of this inspection. They welcome its inclusive and nurturing ethos and say that all children are treated with equity, parity and kindness. The school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship and RE.