

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

<b>Midhurst Church of England Primary School</b>	
Ashfield Road, Midhurst GU29 9JX	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Chichester</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	West Sussex
Date of inspection	13 June 2017
Dates of last inspection	5 and 11 October 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	VC primary 125988
Headteacher	Sally Clarke
Inspector's name and number	Hilary Ferries 276

### School context

Midhurst Church of England Primary is a one form entry school which serves the town of Midhurst. The number of pupils entitled to the pupil premium is below the national average as is the number of pupils with English as an additional language. The number of pupil with special educational needs is similar to the national average. The headteacher has been in post for just over two years and the vicar for four years. The school was judged to be good by Ofsted in July 2015.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Midhurst Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- Leaders at all levels are committed to the development of the school as a church school. They know their school well and are taking action to develop the Christian distinctiveness further.
- Christian values underpin all aspects of school life and are known and referred to by all.
- Opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development enhance the learning and development of the pupils' understanding of the world.
- The Christian ethos contributes well to the positive relationships with and the extensive support for families and the local community.
- The introduction of 'Understanding Christianity' is improving the quality of the religious education (RE) in the school.
- There is a developing understanding of the place of prayer.

### Areas to improve

- Develop opportunities for prayer and the reflection areas, building on the successful prayer week, so that pupils develop a greater understanding of the potential of prayer in their lives.
- Monitor and evaluate the pupil led worship and use the feedback to support the planning and delivery of their worship sessions.
- Make the links between the Christian values and their biblical roots more explicit to enable pupils to appreciate the impact this has on their experience at school.
- Develop ways of collecting parent views on a systematic basis to include their voice in the self-evaluation of the school as a church school.

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

The positive introduction and development of the six Christian values of respect, creativity, kindness, peace, forgiveness and friendship, led by the headteacher since her appointment two years ago, has meant that they are known by the whole school community and articulated by all. Pupils talk confidently about the values and the reason they are important to them. One pupil said, 'they make you a better person'. Some pupils make the biblical links to the values, but this is a developing area and not all pupils appreciate the links or talk about them making a difference to what they experience at school. The values, displayed in the values tree in the hall, are used as collective worship themes and pupils are rewarded with certificates for living the values in school. Pupils describe the school as inclusive and welcoming to all, whether they are Christian, from other faiths or of none and talk about the application of the values for everyone. They talked about the importance of valuing and being valued and of respect for everyone.

Effective provision is in place for the different needs of learners and extensive tracking indicates that all groups of pupils are making good progress. Pupils value the work of their teachers, framing this in the school Christian values and there are many opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in the wide-ranging curriculum, based on the commitment to the education of the 'whole child'. This includes forest school and allocating time to activities such as the friendship teas with members of the community and the food bank run by the church community. Spiritual development is a priority for the school. A recent prayer week was held where pupils had the opportunity to take part in a range of activities, including asking 'big questions' and 'fizzy forgiveness'. These have made them more aware of the purpose and value of prayer. The focus on reflection is seen in the developing areas in the classrooms, which are creative and original. The school has used the 'Year of the Bible' diocesan art competition to support this and have been awarded several prizes. Behaviour in the school is good and pupils link this to the Christian values of the school.

The recent introduction of 'Understanding Christianity', focused on developing a deeper religious, theological and cultural literacy, has inspired and motivated staff and pupils. Pupils are very positive about their learning in RE, both the new Christianity units and the teaching about other major world faiths in the syllabus. Pupils talked confidently about their learning and the importance of learning about different religions.

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

Collective worship is well planned and organised. The worship team, made up of the headteacher, the RE leader, the music co-ordinator and the vicar, is always seeking creative and innovative ways to develop worship. Examples of this are the recent reflection day and prayer week. This was identified through pupil evaluation carried out by the RE leader where pupils said they were not sure of the place and purpose of prayer. A series of activities were held to raise pupil awareness of worship. These included, each class making a candle for worship which emphasises the special nature of class worship and in the prayer focus, pupils were given the opportunity to express their hopes, to remember those important to them and to 'dump the bad stuff' by writing things on a piece of paper, crumpling it up and putting it in a wheelbarrow and then they were burned. These have successfully helped pupils to have a better understanding of the purpose of prayer and worship.

Each of the Christian values is explored as a worship theme which further embeds them. Whole school worship is led by the headteacher and vicar and pupil evaluations show they enjoy the 'fun and interesting' times and the fact that they are both 'good at explaining'. Staff confidence to lead worship is developing and there are opportunities for staff development in this area to support them further. A recent development has been the introduction of year six pupils to lead worship in the classes once a week. They plan the sessions and then deliver collective worship in groups across the school. They enjoy this and feel that they relate well to the younger pupils. One pupil said, 'We tell it from a child's point of view, we are less formal and it is more personal'. Pupils are positive about the worship experience and the evaluations, carried out by teachers, are enabling them to refine their planning and delivery to give time for pupils to discuss some of the ideas from worship themes further and have more time to reflect.

Pupils have been introduced to the idea of the Trinity and it is being explored in different ways. Pupils interviewed could talk about this and showed an appreciation of the nature of the three in one. As well as the weekly worship sessions from the vicar, the school attends worship at the church several times during the year and for some Sunday services such as Mothering Sunday. This along with the links between church and school such as volunteers from the congregation coming to support and the participation of pupils with the foodbank strengthens the sense of community.

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

The leadership have addressed the issues from the previous inspection to review the Christian values. The six values are articulated by all and contribute to the school's positive ethos and achievements. The headteacher has been in post for two years and she is committed to exploring and developing the Christian ethos of the school to further develop Christian distinctiveness in partnership with the whole school community and all stakeholders speak positively of the impact this has had. She also provides strong pastoral support for families and initiatives such as the learning mentors and play therapist support the well-being of all pupils. Parents recognise this commitment. She is well supported and challenged by the governors, especially the ethos committee, who have a strategic vision for the school as a church school. They review policies to ensure they reflect the Christian values and monitor their implementation. They also support the self-evaluation of the school as a church school, reporting progress to the whole governing body. The main areas identified for improvement are woven through the school development plan which reinforces the importance to the school community of the school as a church school. Their effective support and challenge is ensuring that the sense of a whole school community moving forward.

Parents are very positive about the school. They like the Christian ethos in the context of respect for all, the way that the major world religions are taught and that the pupils visit all the places of worship in the town. Parents interviewed say that they are kept well informed about what is happening at school. They feel that their children are well cared for and encouraged and that the staff put in a great deal of effort into their learning. Governors do not have a systematic way of collecting the views of parents to bring another dimension to the self-evaluation particularly to enhance the opportunity for their involvement in the development of the school as a church school.

Links with the parish church are very strong. Everyone is very positive about the vicar who has introduced ways of bringing the church, school and local community together through a range of initiatives such as Messy Church, the foodbank and the friendship teas as well as being a regular visitor in the school providing pastoral care and leading worship. The school has made good use of the support available from the Diocese and many members of staff have benefited from the training and development opportunities. As a result, the leadership and staff teams are more confident about their school as a church school and where to go next. The school is an active member of the Rother Valley partnership of schools and TESLA Teaching School Alliance. They share expertise and develop good practice across the partnerships.

Arrangements for collective worship and RE meet statutory requirements.

SIAMS report June 2017 Midhurst Church of England Primary School, Midhurst GU29 9JX