

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

### St Peter's CE Infant School

Tandridge Lane, Oxted, RH8 9NN	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Southwark</b>
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Surrey
Name of multi-academy trust / federation	NA
Date of inspection	3 May 2018
Date of last inspection	June 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Infant (KSI) 125197
Headteacher	Lenia Greenaway
Inspector's name and number	John Viner NS144

#### School context

St Peter's is a very small infant school, located in the village of Tandridge and serving the four parishes of the benefice of Oxted. The school is popular and often over-subscribed. Its 88 pupils are drawn from the local area. The majority are of White British heritage. There is a much higher than average proportions of pupils with special educational needs and a much lower than average proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives additional funding. A very few speak English as an additional language. Two thirds of pupils attend church. Pupils achieve well and standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are consistently above national averages.

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

- The headteacher, governors and incumbent share and live out an ambitious Christian vision that extends beyond the walls of the school to the whole village.
- Distinctly Christian values underpin the school and are evident in every aspect of its work.
- There is a shared sense of spirituality that is recognised by the whole school community.
- Collective worship and prayer are at the heart of the school and become a part of pupils' daily experience and conversation.
- An excellent Religious Education (RE) programme gives pupils a secure grounding in the relevance of faith and encourages them to think about deep questions with unusual maturity.
- The strong bonds between the school and the church unite them in a seamless partnership of Christian witness to the community they serve.

#### Areas to improve

- Review the school's generic motto so that it better reflects the reality of the school's distinctive Christian character.
- Make better use of the governors' Ethos Committee so that it is an even more effective tool for keeping the school's Christian distinctiveness under review.

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

The school's motto, 'learning for life' falls short of the reality, which is anchored in a set of nine explicitly Christian values that are deeply embedded in every aspect of the school's work. Parents say that it is the values they acquire at St Peter's that stay with them as they get older and provide a foundation for their lives. These Christian values are evident in the mutually caring relationships between and among adults and learners, and they inspire the respect and compassion that characterises the school community. Learners demonstrate great care for one another and say how much they value these relationships. They say how important it is to understand another's point of view. This is exemplified by a pupil who said, of another, 'I forgive him and don't tell'. Because they know that they matter as individuals and are each loved by God, learners realise that they are safe, valued and special. As a result, the majority are keen to come to school where they behave impeccably, work hard, make excellent progress and achieve standards that are higher than national averages. Pupils delight in the many responsibilities they can embrace, from serving on the school council to caring for the school garden. They regard these as God-given opportunities to put faith into action.

There is a highly developed understanding of spirituality that is shared across the school community so that, from the time they join the school, children learn to value life, ask increasingly deep questions about meaning and purpose and develop skills of quiet reflection. Older pupils demonstrate a sense of spiritual confidence that is beyond their years so that, by the time they leave the school, their spiritual awareness is highly developed. Prayer and spiritual thinking becomes a part of their everyday conversation, and pupils speak of 'rooms filled with happiness and love'. As a result, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has a significant impact on their learning by deepening their thinking and wider awareness. Every opportunity is taken to promote pupils' broad understanding of diversity so that, inspired by the school's Christian character, they acquire positive attitudes of tolerance and respect towards others. As a result, learners understand that Christianity is a multicultural world faith among other faith communities. They are excited by RE and enjoy the challenges it offers and many pupils say how much they love learning about other faiths. Thus it makes a major contribution to the school's overall Christian character.

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

Collective worship lies at the heart of the school and learners know that it is an important aspect of each school day. Learners are unanimous in declaring how much they look forward to worship and this is evident in their enthusiasm, yet reverence, as they gather together. Worship is inclusive and, regardless of faith or belief, all who attend, adults or learners, say how much they benefit from this celebration of faith. Worship is Biblical, rooted in the person of Jesus and even these early learners can explain why God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The use of a simple liturgy and the lighting of a candle helps learners to experience Anglican tradition and practice and this is reinforced by the regular acts of worship that take place in the parish church.

Worship is carefully and sensitively planned by the headteacher and incumbent around a series of themes which include the school's Christian values and the church year. The regular cycle of themes ensures that learners encounter each of the school's specific values in depth once during their time at the school. Worship is led by a range of staff, the headteacher and clergy and this variety helps to keep it fresh and interesting. Learners have many opportunities to take part in worship, through reading prayers, which they may have written, and through playing out roles to illustrate a story. They say how much they value these occasions, particularly the class-led acts of worship, which they help to plan and organise. Parents appreciate the opportunities they have to attend class-led worship and the popular services in church. They comment on their children's developing spirituality, noting how they frequently talk about school worship at home and incorporate what they have learnt into their family life.

Prayer is woven like a golden thread around all aspects of school so that, for the learners, it is more than an element of worship, it is a natural part of life. Pupils particularly love the Peace Garden, developed since the last inspection, and its opportunities for quiet, personal prayer and reflection and they are delighted that worship sometimes takes place in this open air space, where they feel at one with creation. From the moment they enter the school, children understand prayer as 'talking to God' and older pupils develop a deeper understanding of the nature and purpose of prayer, appreciating that it is important to people of all faiths. There are many excellent opportunities in classrooms and around the building, for learners to record their deepest thoughts, feelings and prayers. As a result, they can set prayer that takes place in collective worship in its context of being both public and personal, recognising, with an impressive degree of understanding, that each day is bracketed by prayer.

Since the last inspection, leaders and governors have developed good systems to listen to learners' views as part of their own monitoring of collective worship. This ensures that its further development is organic and relevant.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

Standards in RE are higher than national expectations and learners make excellent progress, regardless of their starting points. Their work at least matches, and is sometimes better than, their work in other core subjects such as writing. This is because great care is taken in RE to promote learners' deep thinking and ask challenging questions. As a result, learners acquire a mature and impressive range of high level skills that help them to reflect on their learning and draw their own conclusions. Young children have good opportunities to think about their own ideas and developing beliefs while older pupils say how much they enjoy RE because they love learning about other religions. For many pupils, RE is their favourite subject. Parents confirm this, saying how enthusiastically their children talk about RE at home. They report that their children are being well-prepared for a multi-faith world.

Teaching is consistently good and often outstanding because teachers have generally good subject knowledge and know how to make lessons interesting and engaging. As pupils move through the school, their work in RE becomes increasingly detailed and teachers are skilled at promoting their thinking and asking deep questions. There is a well-established, but still developing, system of regular assessment of RE so that teachers understand the progress their pupils are making and can plan for their next steps.

RE has a very high profile in the school and the introduction of a new and more demanding curriculum has raised further the quality of learning. Since the school does not have the full primary age range, leaders have sensibly limited the teaching of other faiths to those of the Abrahamic tradition. The curriculum is enriched by visits to the church, a synagogue and a mosque and both pupils and their parents say how much these visits have helped their learning. Consequently, by the time they leave the school, pupils have an excellent understanding of Christianity and a secure grasp of the key features of Islam and Judaism. RE is strongly led by the headteacher, whose knowledge and expertise has ensured that all teachers have the necessary skills to teach the subject, that it is well-resourced and that the curriculum meets the needs of all learners. She rigorously and effectively monitors the quality of teaching to ensure that high standards are sustained. She is well-supported by diocesan officers and through local school networks so that the quality of RE at St Peter's can be measured against a wider range of schools.

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

The headteacher, incumbent and governors are united behind an ambitious Christian vision for the school that places it at the heart of the community. Since the last inspection, governors and headteacher, have reviewed and refined the school's Christian values and how they are expressed. Now, they demonstrably live out their vision through the Christian values that the school promotes, sustaining its excellent performance and impacting on the lives of all learners through their personal development and academic progress.

Leaders and governors regularly share their self-evaluation of the school's Christian distinctiveness and so have a strong understanding of its strengths and areas for development. This is supported by the focused work of the governors' Ethos Committee, although its irregularity limits its effectiveness in systematic self-review. Governors work closely with the headteacher and provide both challenge and support. In particular, they are helping to navigate the current financial challenges that the school faces. Governors are clear about the school's future leadership needs and know how they might address them. Governors are proactive in both supporting the life of the school and in monitoring its effectiveness. They regularly visit, talk to staff and learners, and review collective worship and RE. As a result, their observations make a genuine contribution to ongoing improvement.

The clear Christian vision that drives the school informs both the curriculum and policy-making. Consequently, learners know they are well-supported and there is always an adult to help them. This contributes to their excellent patterns of behaviour. The underpinning Christian values make a positive contribution to the effective promotion of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to the whole life of the school.

There are excellent links with local schools while the partnership with the parish church is strong and impressive. Each partner strengthens the effectiveness of the other. The life of the school is inseparable from the life of the church and even Sunday services link to the acts of worship held at the school. This close relationship is exemplified in the monthly tea, organised by the church and attended by staff, governors, and families from the school. The whole village community understands and values this partnership, which is of mutual and substantial benefit and helps the school to have a real and wide-reaching impact on both local and global communities. This relates particularly to joint charitable events, for example, the very active support of a child in Kenya through links with an international charity.

Together, church and school are a beacon of Christian witness to the community which they serve.