



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Fabians Way
Henfield
West Sussex
BN5 9PU

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Chichester

Local authority: West Sussex

Dates of inspection: 10 May 2016

Date of last inspection: 13 July 2010

School's unique reference number: 126028

Headteacher: Laura Roberts

Inspector's name and number: Julie Burnett-Kirk 748

School context

St Peter's Primary School serves the large rural village of Henfield and nearby smaller villages. There are 375 children taught in fourteen classes. There is a higher than national average proportion of children who have special educational needs and 4.4% of children are eligible for pupil premium. 6.2% of children speak English as an additional language. The previous headteacher retired in July 2015 and the deputy has been acting headteacher since September 2015. A new headteacher has been appointed for September 2016. The parish church is near to the school.

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

- The school's strong Christian character defines the ethos of the school and makes a significant contribution to the caring relationships in the school and to children's wellbeing.
- The school has raised the profile of religious education (RE) and improved the quality of teaching and children's learning.
- School leaders, including governors, have a strong shared commitment to the school's vision and action plan, which are moving the school forward and making a difference to the achievement of all pupils.

Areas to improve

- Make explicit the distinctive Christian values relevant to the school context and embed in the daily life of the school, so that there is an impact on children's spiritual development.
- Extend the monitoring and evaluation process by leaders and governors to identify the impact of worship and RE on the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development.
- Strengthen the skills and confidence of the teaching team so that children are able to learn from religion and understand the impact in their daily lives.

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

This welcoming school community has made a promise to their children that they will 'help them be the best they can be!' Their focus on four core values – respect, resourcefulness, resilience and aiming high are interwoven with Christian values, such as hope and faith, to provide an ethos where the school community works together to meet the needs of the whole child. In their school improvement journey they have maintained this focus at the same time as ensuring good progress and achievement in learning for all children. There are strong partnerships with other agencies to ensure that the needs of all children are met. Families are supported through 'Think Family' and other agencies depending on their needs. Children who require extra support are provided with a range of carefully planned and evaluated intervention programmes and learning mentors, play therapist and school counsellors support the children's well-being. Inclusivity is linked to Bible stories such as the healing of the leper and children explained that Christian values such as 'faith, hope, forgiveness, trust and peace ... are guidelines of how we should live and set on the right path.' Children's moral and social values are influenced by their core values, however there isn't yet a clear understanding of the impact on children's spiritual development. The school's Christian character is evident throughout the school environment and supports children's wellbeing. For example, in one classroom a child explained how their class reflection area was used for prayer and also where they can use worry boxes if they are feeling worried or sad or need to calm down. This child now helps others in the playground because she 'knows how they feel'. Respect for diverse communities is encouraged through RE and worship and involvement with charities, as well as visits to other schools. RE has an impact on the Christian character of the school. For example, when learning about Noah and the rainbow a child explained how 'God was kind. He could have told them off but he didn't. He sent them a rainbow promise.' The Christian values of hope and faith were then explored with the class. In another year group work over time shows a journey that began with looking at baptism, followed by Holy Week, the resurrection, ascension and Pentecost. The message of Jesus was related to pupils' everyday life and influenced the Christian character of the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is carefully planned by the worship subject leader and the parish priest. Clergy from other denominations also regularly lead worship as well as staff. Four services a year are held in the church, two of which are Eucharistic. Consequently, children experience a range of styles and school council feedback indicates that they enjoy worship, love the singing and like to learn about issues in the world. One child spoke about how they like worship 'because it was letting us know that we can help homeless people.' Themes show there is regular teaching about Jesus and that Bible stories form the basis for each theme. Children are developing their understanding of the Trinity through worship themes and RE. The school has begun to link distinctive Christian values to their themes and the vicar expands Key Stage Two worship times to include key areas for reflection. In this way collective worship is central to the life of the school community and provides children with a good knowledge of the Bible and the life of Jesus. Children described how they learned in worship that 'when we're lonely or sad Jesus is always there.' Prayer is beginning to influence the spiritual development of children through class prayers, the Lord's Prayer, the school prayer and spontaneous prayers in classes before lunch. Prayer and reflection is extended to the outside environment through their quiet garden, which emerged as an idea from the children in memory of a staff member who had died. Parents appreciate the worship in the school and the church. The parent of a Reception year child told how her daughter says 'peace be with you Mummy' and other parents mentioned how much their children enjoyed the singing, the different themes and clergy and now asked more questions about church and religion. The worship subject leader has evaluated worship through the school council and staff and pupil questionnaires. Governors are beginning to be involved in

the evaluation process and changes have been made based on children's suggestions. For example, when children requested having a larger role they are now involved in leading worship through year group assemblies, specialist assemblies and participate in church services through prayers, reading, drama and singing. At this stage the evaluation has focused on children's views rather than the impact on children's spiritual development.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The school has put time and resources into raising the profile of RE so that expectations and standards are in line with other core subjects. This can be seen in their approach to planning, marking and feedback, which is encouraging children to take pride in their RE work and engage in a dialogue with their teacher about their learning. Children receive a varied RE curriculum through discrete teaching as well as through topics. Approaches include written and oral responses, art, drama and Godly Play experiences. Christianity is the main study with a proportion of time allocated to other faiths. Leadership of RE is good. A staff audit was used to identify training needs and staff were supported to ensure the quality of teaching and learning are good. The RE subject leader has worked closely with the diocese and attended training and network meetings focusing on the RE curriculum, assessment and monitoring. Planned lesson observations, pupil surveys, focused learning walks and work scrutiny form part of the regular RE monitoring programme in the school. Staff are informed of findings and these are reported termly to governors. Children are encouraged to use 'Big Questions', which are then answered by other children, the vicar or other staff. For example, How did God make Jesus? Why did God give Jesus to the world? Why did he die on the cross? Children were observed to think deeply during Godly play and other lessons. In one of the observed lessons a child had asked the question 'How could Jesus be with us always if he's gone to heaven?' This was explored through discussion and children answered 'His spirit will stay down there on earth. God is like the dove and Jesus has got the Holy spirit. Jesus is still there in the Holy Spirit.' The school has begun to evaluate achievement in RE and its impact on the children's spiritual development.

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

There has been good leadership and management of the school during their recent period of change. This can be seen in careful succession planning, staff being well supported pastorally and through continuing professional development to sustain improvements. Governors explained how much they valued their involvement in the process of appointing the new headteacher and how it helped them to look at what they valued as a church school. The school community has reviewed their values and staff and governors have worked together on the church school self-evaluation toolkit, which has been used to drive forward change as a church school. Governors visit the school half-termly for a day to look at specific elements of the school improvement plan. They feed back to the senior leadership team and this is then reported to the full governing body. Governors explained how 'the school improvement plan is used at all meetings, highlighted, critiqued and challenged and helps shape future plans.' As a result, governors have a good understanding of their school. This process is not yet embedded for the church self-evaluation process, which was an issue from the previous inspection. The arrangements for RE and worship meet statutory requirements. The school works with other church schools through RE network meetings and is involved in diocesan events and training. Children, staff and parents speak highly of the vicar and value how approachable he is and the impact he has on their children through worship and RE. He meets many of the families at their 'Little Fishes' church group before they come to school and therefore many of the children know him when they start school. Other members of the church support the school modelling Godly play sessions and supporting RE planning. This is a two-way process with the parish church having the school's St Peter's crosses embroidered on their altar frontals. Children are involved in the remembrance service in the church and at the war memorial. They say the eulogy for each of the 11 people who died and say the prayers as they lay the poppies on the graves. Hundreds of people attend this event and it has helped to raise the status of the school as a church school.

The school has good relationships with parents through parent class representative meetings and provides many supportive workshops and information for parents. One of the staff summed up the qualities of the school - 'What sets St Peter's apart is the true sense of togetherness that combines the staff, children and indeed wider community. Working at the school I feel privileged to be part of a family that celebrates and enjoys success whilst giving love and support in times of hardship.'

SIAMS report May 2016 St Peter's VA Primary School Henfield BN5 9PU