

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Lympne Church of England Primary School

Octavian Drive Lympne Hythe Kent CT21 4JG	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Canterbury
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Kent
Date of inspection	24 March 2017
Date of last inspection	19 April 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 118680
Headteacher	Joyce Rhodes
Inspector's name and number	Jane Garrett 618

School context

Lympne Church of England Primary School is a single form entry village school with 212 pupils on roll. Fifteen percent of pupils have special educational needs and ten percent of pupils are registered as in receipt of pupil premium funding, placing the school below the national average for these numbers. The school had an Ofsted inspection in November 2016 and was judged to be good in all categories. Ofsted noted that leadership of the school was strong. The new incumbent has recently taken up post.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Lympne as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The strong leadership and high level of commitment of the headteacher, together with the successful partnership of the church, has propelled the school along a pathway of improvement which has resulted in Lympne successfully embedding a strong Christian ethos across the school community.
- The development of the Christian values has completely transformed the ethos of the school. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how they impact on their personal development and learning.
- Strong partnerships with the local parish church have been mutually beneficial and this has had a positive impact on the spiritual development of the school community.
- A belief in the God given value of every child inspires excellent pastoral care for them and their families. Pupils respond by showing respect and consideration for others which results in outstanding relationships.

Areas to improve

- To provide opportunities for pupils to learn from other cultures and faiths, in order to understand more fully life in multi-cultural Britain.
- Deepen pupils' spiritual understanding by encouraging worship lead by other Christian denominations.

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

The development and profile of key Christian values since the last inspection has been the main force in transforming the Christian ethos and learning environment of the school. The five core values of love, friendship, respect, forgiveness and perseverance are explicitly understood to be rooted in Christian teaching. They are embedded in every aspect of school life. This has had a profound and positive impact on all pupils. They are seen by children and adults as the values that underpin relationships with each other and they are embedded into the school behaviour and reward policy. Parents and governors share this view and say that the values help children to understand how to live their lives more fully. They are evidenced around the school through displays, which act as a reminder, and opportunities for reflection on the values and the related Bible stories. The caring ethos created by the Christian values means that children enjoy coming to school and attendance is high. Consequently pupils feel safe in school and have no concerns about bullying. The school's Christian values and character directly benefit the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils, by linking these to the wider curriculum whenever relevant, enabling exploration of these values. Ofsted recently identified teaching and learning as good. The leadership feel and data suggests that real progress has been made in closing gaps in learning particularly between boys and girls. Pupils enjoy religious education (RE) lessons, and can explain how various Bible stories have enabled them to lead better lives. This shows that RE has contributed considerably to their SMSC development, through debate and increased tolerance of those of other faiths or none. A year 2 RE lesson provided opportunities to discuss how various people felt towards Jesus. From the story, respect for Jesus was discussed and linked to the school value of 'respect'. At Christmas and Easter children look at how Christians around the world celebrate these events. This helps to give children a global perspective of Christianity. A week focused on the school's values is held bi-annually in church and acts as an enrichment day. Last year this was based on the values embedded in Christian marriage and then linked to the school's values through relevant RE and cross curricular work. This received a high profile not only within the school but also within the local community and church. Pupils are confident and articulate when talking about their ideas and beliefs. Consequently the school is popular with parents and draws children from outside the catchment area. Parents describe the school as 'amazing', 'such a supportive school', 'very different to a non-faith school'. They appreciate the time that the school gives pupils 'to explore important issues'. This confirms that the school ensures the well-rounded holistic development for pupils and prepares them very well for the transition to secondary school. In their RE lessons pupils show a high level of respect when talking about those of other faiths. Pupils learn about other major religions, but opportunities to gain first-hand experience of those who practise other faiths are limited. With the majority of pupils from white British families, direct contact with people from other cultures and faiths is underdeveloped.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is highly valued by all members of the school community. Pupils of all ages say that worship influences attitudes and behaviour across the school. They say it helps them develop a respect for God and an understanding of Jesus' command to love our neighbour. Focus boards enhance the environment for worship in the school hall. The pupils care deeply for the needs of one another and others. This extends beyond the school and local community to supporting both global and local charities such as 'Children in Need' and 'Operation Sunshine'. An act of worship was observed where children read Bible readings based on Matthew chapter 6. This was then linked to giving for 'Comic Relief' and the initiatives that had taken place. There is a spiritual council which consists of children elected by their peers, who act as worship leaders. The vicar and members of the church lead worship weekly. At present there is little experience of non-Anglican traditions. Pupils understand the importance of creating an atmosphere of reverence. During worship they participate enthusiastically and willingly. All worship is biblically based and relates to the school values. As a result pupils are able to apply these to their daily lives. They talk readily of the moral lessons they take from the parables of Jesus. At the start of worship, three candles are lit representing the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and as a result even younger pupils show an understanding of the Holy Trinity. Prayer is central to worship and to daily life in school. Pupils understand the importance of prayer and they respect the space that is created during times of prayer. There is a place for prayer and reflection in the main entrance. Children write prayers on paper doves to place on the prayer tree and they are encouraged to pray and reflect. Pupils welcome opportunities to actively participate and lead prayers in classroom worship and to play a role in shaping and leading whole school worship for events such as Easter which is led by Year 5 pupils. Worship encompasses all the major traditions and festivals of the Christian year and introduces pupils to Anglican traditions and practices in an age-appropriate way. However there are few opportunities for pupils to experience worship led

by other Christian denominations. The spiritual council, governors and parents monitor worship and responses are acted upon. The school now follows the diocesan plans for worship. Whilst this was introduced, the headteacher led worship on a daily basis in order to model and coach staff and pupils and provide a consistent approach. Staff have now started to take more ownership of leading worship regularly. The vicar leads collective worship weekly. During the interregnum the church warden fulfilled this role, so ensuring continuity and consistency to worship and relationships with the school. Due to geography, the pupils can only worship or visit the church occasionally. However children feel very comfortable in church. One child wrote that 'it was like being at home'.

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

Significant progress has been made since the last inspection, with all areas for development being addressed. The headteacher models strong, focused and compassionate leadership and enables others to develop their leadership and management skills in a safe but challenging environment. Leadership at all levels ensures that the school is continually developing and that standards are rising. For example, members of the school council, spiritual council and charity committee are elected by their peers and this responsibility is taken very seriously. The school's Christian vision is articulated very strongly by leaders and governors who all model Christian attitudes and responses. This Christian vision, which has the needs of pupils at its heart, underpins all the school's leadership decisions. Governors explained that the recent appointment of a new headteacher was heavily influenced by the desire to appoint someone supportive of the school's Christian vision. Pupils were involved in the appointment process and also that of the incumbent, so developing confidence and skills as young leaders. Governors know their school very well and since the last inspection have sharpened their focus. They take their role very seriously and all governors ask challenging questions whilst providing outstanding support in many areas of the work of the school. The church also makes an outstanding contribution to the life and work of the school both in terms of governance and pastoral support for pupils and their families and is instrumental in building relationships with parents and the wider community. Parents are invited to attend collective worship weekly, so involving them in the life of the school and raising awareness of the school values through Christian teaching. One parent spoke about the enthusiasm with which her child discussed the value of the term and how she could apply it to daily living. The strong Christian character gives rise to very supportive and effective relationships with parents, built around a caring family ethos. Parents are confident of the school's leadership. The school has a high profile within the community through initiatives such as carol singing and trees have recently been donated to the school which were planted with the help of the children. Work is regularly monitored and evaluated so bringing about important changes, such as improved attainment in RE. Recent training on assessment, moderation and questioning skills has also had an impact on standards in RE. Pupil feedback is acted on, for example when children asked for the words to the hymns to be enlarged. Within RE Lessons children look at the role of the church and compare St. Stephen's church with Canterbury Cathedral. Year 6 visit the Cathedral to take part in the school's Cathedral day and the spiritual council attend worship at the cathedral. These visits and the ensuing discussion make children very aware of the differences between their local church and the national church. The National Society's Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education is fully implemented.

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