

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Shipleigh Church of England Primary School	
School Lane Shipleigh Horsham RH13 8PL	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Chichester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	West Sussex
Date of inspection	8 February 2017
Date of last inspection	27 May 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 125992
Headteacher	Jen Harvey
Inspector's name and number	Rosemary Appleby 749

School context

Shipleigh CE Primary School is smaller than the average size primary school with 77 pupils on roll. Shipleigh has experienced instability in leadership since two substantive headteachers left within two years, the most recent left in December 2015. The current headteacher and the religious education (RE) leader took up post in September 2016 and in the intervening nine months there were two interim headteachers and limited RE leadership. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average as is the number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Attendance is below national average but rising. Most pupils come from a White British heritage.

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

- The Christian character of the school is shown through a strong inclusive ethos of nurture, underpinned by Christian values, which results in the school community feeling that they are part of a family.
- The Christian vision and commitment of the headteacher, staff and governors is reflected in their resolve to build on current strengths as a church school.
- The shared understanding of the school's vision of 'Friendship, Faith and Future' effectively underpins daily school life and shapes school improvement plans.

Areas to improve

- Develop a shared understanding of spirituality so that opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum can be explicitly identified and planned for.
- Develop opportunities for global studies so that learners increase their awareness of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith.
- When monitoring collective worship ensure that pupils, governors and staff write evaluative comments so that impact and improvement of provision is evident over time.

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

This is an improving church school where there has been a focus on driving up attainment and improving leadership across the school. Although some academic outcomes remain below national expectations data shows an upward trend, illustrating that attainment for all groups is catching up with national expectations. Shipley school effectively provides an inclusive environment where the needs of pupils are met as well as a high level of nurture and care to its school community through a strong Christian ethos. This is evident in the positive caring relationships across the school community and the good behaviour seen around the school. The school motto of 'Friendship, Faith and Future' effectively underpins the life of the school and pupils say that 'it's everywhere'. The interpretation of this motto, into the schools vision, has recently been revisited and agreed by the school community and this has ensured shared ownership and understanding. However, the school community has yet to explicitly link the friendship element with the friendship of God. The biblical reference 'life in all its fullness' (John 10.10) has been linked to the 'future' element of the vision but biblical roots have not yet been explored explicitly in relation to 'friendship' and 'faith'. Each term two from the twelve Christian values in the 'Values for Life' programme have a focus both in collective worship and RE and parents praise the school because these 'Christian values are woven into everyday life naturally'. The 'protective pastoral family feel' is credited in helping pupils care for each other and the strong links with the church are seen as providing a 'strong foundations' for the future. Pupils say that faith is important so that you have faith in yourself, others and God. They understand that prayer and going to church are important and help them to understand that 'God is by your side' and are ways to 'respect God'. RE contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural (SMSC) growth and provides opportunities to reflect on values, learn about world religions and compare Bible stories and parables to their own lives. Pupils learn about Judaism, Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism and through this work pupils develop compassion, empathy and respect for other cultures. RE teaches pupils about Christianity at home and abroad: giving pupils an understanding of the multi-denomination, multi-cultural Christian family and making a valid contribution to developing the Christian character of the school. Pupils have been interviewed by the RE leader and answers illustrate that they enjoy RE, learn about Bible stories and pilgrimages. Learning about Christian symbolism, such as candles, reminds them that Jesus is the light of the world. The school has identified the need to agree a shared definition of spirituality to improve consistency of understanding across the school community. Leaders have plans in place to increase pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith so that they are fully aware of the global nature of Christianity. Pupils understand that giving money for charity, such as Children in Need and the Chestnut Tree Hospice link to their Christian values of friendship, faith and future. Displays around the school of the Lord's Prayer, prayer of St Richard, school prayer, Trinity, Local parish church (St Mary the virgin), crosses, Bibles and creation, contribute to SMSC; They provide an environment which reflects the school's foundation and as a result frame reflection in a Christian context.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is a special and distinct time in the school day when Christian values, linked to biblical references, are effectively reinforced. This ensures that the vision and values of the school remain central to the life of the school community. Pupils are actively engaged and respectful through participation in all elements of worship such as singing, reflection time, and praying. Recently pupils have started to choose where they sit in worship and this adds to the 'family feel' of the school as they often sit with friends and family. Pupils have a strong presence in leading forms of worship in a variety of settings. The recently formed pupils' worship team help to plan which Bible stories are appropriate to use in whole school worship and they read prayers which they have written. Pupils enjoy planning their individual class assemblies and writing prayers in class worship files. As a result they have increased opportunities to link Christian values to their prayers and value the class worship as 'everyone gets involved'. When the school visits the church for services such as eucharist, Easter, Christmas, harvest and Christingle, pupils, parents, governors and staff read prayers illustrating that the school community value and participate in worship. Pupils know that their Vicar is important because she is the leader of St Mary's Church and they understand that Christians like to meet together in a church to give their thanks to God. They enjoy assemblies where she teaches them about God through stories from the Bible. The person of Jesus Christ is evident in collective worship. Pupils have opportunities to develop their understanding of the Trinity and many pupils know that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Aspects of Anglican worship such as the structure of gather, engage, respond and send and the Eucharist are well established. A focal point of worship is created with Christian symbolism such as crosses, candles and Bibles. Worship is enriched through contributions from the Christian group 'Splash'. They increase learners' understanding and enjoyment of Christian traditions 'because they tell us stories from the Bible in a funny and fun way and we like their costumes'. Prayer is important to this school and pupils know that prayer is 'being respectful to God'. Each class has a prayer area with a prayer box where pupils place their prayers which often link to the termly focus value. These areas are rich with information about religions and values but because they do not consistently display responses from pupils it is difficult to assess their impact on spiritual development. Prayer areas in each classroom and the peace garden in the outside environment appropriately extend opportunities for quiet

reflection. The peace garden reinforces Anglican worship with the inclusion of stained glass window pictures, prayer flags and the Lord's Prayer and pupils value this quiet place for prayer. Parents told me that their children often come home and write prayers and sing them a song about the Trinity. Pupils are aware of biblical material and are beginning to relate this to their own lives. One pupil interviewed said that the good Samaritan was about getting on with everyone and linked it to the Christian value of friendship. The services at St Mary's church effectively reinforce Anglican tradition and are well attended by parents. Collective worship is well planned with informal contributions from clergy and pupils. Governors, staff and pupils regularly monitor collective worship. However, the monitoring does not include effective evaluative comments and therefore it is challenging to track what actions have been taken to improve collective worship and the impact of any improvements

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

Since December 2013 the school has experienced leadership challenges and changes. The school motto of 'Friendship, Faith and Future' has been steadfast and has continued to nurture all the school community. The school now looks forward to the future and a time of stability with the appointment of the substantive headteacher and has effective plans in place to embed and develop the good practice that is in place. The headteacher has inspired school leaders and parents and this has made an impact and brought them together as a Christian family. Through the recent revisiting of the school motto and vision leaders have a secure understanding of the Christian ethos and clearly articulate a strong understanding of how their Christian vision gives direction for the whole school community through their website, newsletters and action plans. Key issues for development from the previous inspection have been partly addressed; changes in leadership have slowed down the pace of improvement. However, appropriate plans are in place to develop more opportunities for pupils' cultural development through re-establishing links with a school in Kenya, and developing connections with a church school in Yorkshire also called Shipley. Parents speak warmly of the school and value how each child is treated as a real individual by all the staff and are proud of the 'sense of community'. Governors' 2016 questionnaire to parents shows that all of the parents who responded, agree that pupils are taught well about the Christian faith through RE and collective worship and that their children are happy and safe. Newsletters ensure that the school community is aware of which Christian value is being explored. Parents reinforce the values at home and appreciate the fact that 'it does not matter what religion you are' you can interact with your child in discussing the values. The current school plan for improvement of RE, collective worship and Christian character includes appropriate action points linked to Christian distinctiveness and how they will be monitored. One example of this is the updated behaviour policy which reflects both the school's high expectations and Christian character. Governors are committed to the Christian ethos of the school and support the school effectively. They make visits to monitor and attend school events throughout the year enabling them to know their school well. Governors make effective use of diocesan training including training for new church governors and SIAMS. The ethos and worship committee meet regularly and are informed of developments in these areas. This committee has made some impact through acquiring funds to enable the school to be part of the understanding Christianity project next year and during staff interviews candidates are questioned about their commitment to the school's Christian distinctiveness to ensure that the school appoints staff committed to promoting a Christian ethos. However, the minutes do not yet record the voice of this committee as strongly as the voice of those reporting to it. Therefore it is challenging to formally track the impact of this active and enthusiastic committee. Good use is made of diocesan training for staff to support them in ensuring that the school continually evolves its Christian distinctiveness. For example the headteacher has been proactive and is attending diocesan training for new headteachers and undertaking the Church of England qualification for headteachers. A local church school, judged outstanding by SIAMS, is working in partnership with the headteacher and RE leader to enhance their leadership skills as leaders of a church school. Links with the local church, Knepp estate, Sussex Wildlife Trust and local church schools are well established and enhance the provision of the school. The school and local church support charities together at harvest time and the headteacher attends St Mary's parochial church council helping to ensure that the school and church work in partnership and that the church community is aware of the life of the school. Arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements.

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