

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Holy Trinity and St John's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	
St John's Road, Margate, Kent, CT9 1LU	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Canterbury
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Kent
Date of inspection	24 January 2018
Date of last inspection	29 January 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled Primary I18694
Headteacher	Danny Short
Inspector's name and number	Canon Linda Burton 462

School context

The school is a larger than average sized primary school of 402 pupils with two classes in each year group. It serves a community in Margate, which includes areas in the top 1% of deprivation nationally. Pupils are predominantly White British, with a small proportion from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and those who are disabled is above the national average. The proportion of pupils for whom additional pupil premium funding is received is above county and national averages. The school has been rated good by Ofsted since 2009, most recently in the inspection of November 2017.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Holy Trinity and St John's as a Church of England school are good

- The positive, caring and nurturing relationship between all members of the school community creates a clear and inclusive sense of the school as a Christian family.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes across the school are good, reflecting the school's Christian ethos well.
- School leaders are developing the school's Christian ethos and values, through collaboration with other Church of England schools and engagement with the Church of England's leadership development programmes.

Areas to improve

- Prioritise school leaders' formal monitoring and evaluation of the school's Christian distinctiveness so that this can be used to inform strategic planning and drive school improvement.
- Make the links more explicit between the school's Christian values and age-appropriate biblical teaching in the daily life of the school and in documentation, in order to develop further the school's Christian distinctiveness.
- Establish a robust cycle of evaluation of collective worship by the whole school community, to ensure ongoing improvement.
- Embed opportunities for spiritual development in schemes of work throughout the school.

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

The school's Christian and inclusive character and loving, family atmosphere ensure that pupils and their families feel part of Holy Trinity and St John's School, irrespective of their background. Its core values of trust, compassion, hope, forgiveness and friendship are well known and are lived out in practice in the school. A sixth value, respect, was added at the start of this school year. The school environment provides a rich resource, encouraging pupils to relate the values to their own lives. In an interactive display, many have added their responses to the question about this term's value, 'What are your hopes for the future?' Whilst most pupils have a clear understanding of the school's values and can talk about how they impact on their lives, they cannot all confidently explain how the values link with biblical stories. It is not made clear, in displays or on the school's website, how the school's values are rooted in specific Christian teaching. Most pupils in the school make good progress. Many pupils start school with ability levels well below national expectations. By the end of Key Stage 2, their attainment is generally in line with expected progress nationally, and disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to others. Senior leaders and the whole staff team work together to model the school's values and to promote respectful, caring and positive relationships. Pupils say that they feel happy and safe at school and are confident that they could approach an adult in school if they were experiencing difficulties. Parents report that their children enjoy coming to school and feel that the school does its very best to support them. The impact of this is seen in the school's attendance rates, which are in line with national averages, and in the good quality of pupils' attitudes towards learning. Pupils have good relationships with their peers and with adults, and their behaviour throughout the school day is good. Pupils show tolerance and understanding of each other's differences and, in this way, the school is inclusive. All of this reflects the school's underlying ethos well.

Pupils have the opportunity to 'wipe the slate clean' and make a fresh start every week, term and year in all aspects of their life in school. This approach reflects the school's distinctive ethos and core values. Adults in the school understand the relationship between pupils' emotional wellbeing and their academic achievement, and see their work as an expression of the school's Christian ethos. The school helps its most vulnerable pupils to achieve their full potential through its high quality nurture provision. The school's pastoral team provides targeted care and support to pupils and their families who are in any kind of need. For example, at the lunchtime club for international pupils, those who have been at the school for some time are encouraged to welcome and help pupils who are new to the school to feel part of the school's family. The school's rich curriculum and the range of extra-curricular activities contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. For example, through their involvement in the Turner Contemporary gallery's Art Inspiring Change programme, pupils were able to transform an area of Margate and to make a difference to where they live. Pupils demonstrate their commitment to care for those less fortunate than themselves through involvement in fundraising projects. One of these, linked to a local Baptist church's Global Challenge outreach work, aims to improve the quality of life of children in Soroti, Eastern Uganda. However, some pupils are not clear about how charitable giving is a reflection of the school's Christian character. Opportunities for reflection and personal prayer have increased this school year through the rejuvenation of interactive reflection areas in classrooms and in public areas in the school. As yet, there is little evidence of their impact on the wider school community. All staff now teach religious education (RE) to their classes. Pupils say that they enjoy RE and they recognise its importance in helping them to live happily with other people in the world. Most pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of Christianity. In RE lessons, there is some evidence of values being reflected upon by teachers and pupils alike and applied to the topics taught. This enables RE to make a secure contribution to the school's Christian character. During the inspection, pupils were engaged and excited in their RE lessons. They grappled with challenging questions, explored ideas about freedom, justice and peace and devised their own 'ten lessons for living.' In this way, RE makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. The school's provision for spiritual development is otherwise underdeveloped. There is a lack of clear evidence within the school community of a shared understanding of what spirituality means for this school. Opportunities for spiritual development are not an explicit feature of all schemes of work. As a result, not all pupils can talk confidently about its impact on their lives.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The daily act of collective worship brings together the school as a Christian community and promotes a strong sense of belonging. Pupils and adults gather quietly and respectfully for worship. No pupils are withdrawn from worship. There is a clear organisational pattern, with worship led by school staff, class-led worship (to which parents are invited) and Friday celebration worship. Visitors from a range of denominations in the area, including the curate of St John's church, lead worship weekly. This provides pupils with the opportunity to experience and enjoy a variety of worship styles from different Christian traditions. Worship often includes biblical material. Some festivals in the Church's year, for example the recent Christingle service, are celebrated at St John's church with parents and members of the church community. Worship is planned around the school's six values and is biblically based. Through this, pupils are able to develop an understanding of Jesus Christ, of the seasons of the Church's year and of

Christian festivals. Biblical material chosen for worship is not always very clearly linked with the school value for the term, and it is not always readily accessible to the age-range of the pupils. Worship follows a clear four-fold structure and reflects elements of Anglican liturgical practice. The Lord's Prayer is sometimes used. A time of stillness and reflection during worship encourages pupils to consider more deeply how to apply the theme to their own lives and to the lives of others. Overall, whilst being distinctively Christian, the worship programme is inclusive of all pupils in the school. Thus, it provides opportunities for their spiritual and moral development.

Questionnaire data shows that most pupils enjoy worship. They report that they especially like singing, being involved themselves and having a variety of adults and other children lead it. Not all pupils can talk confidently about the impact of worship on their life in school or on their attitudes and actions towards other people in the world. Recent new initiatives include the re-launch of the Young Worship Leaders group for pupils in years 5 and 6. The group led and contributed to collective worship during last term including planning and leading the school's harvest service which celebrated how 'God made a world of difference'. In addition, the after-school group for pupils in years 3 and 4 has more recently been re-launched, enabling pupils to learn about how the life of Jesus is relevant to today's world and to the pupils' own lives. Individual pupils say that they really enjoy their involvement in these groups but, as yet, there is little evidence of their impact on the wider school community. In the last eighteen months, the school's worship life has been enriched by the involvement of the curate at St John's church leading worship and joining other church leaders to lead Scripture Union activity-based workshops for year 6 pupils on the meaning of Christmas and Easter. Staff and other adults in the school community have the opportunity to meet for prayer each week before the start of school. Occasional monitoring and evaluation of acts of worship began at the start of the school year but this does not involve all members of the school community. As a result, the process of ensuring substantial ongoing improvement is not established.

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

The school's leadership and management successfully ensure that structures are in place which focus on pupils' attainment, progress and wellbeing. This is clearly an expression of the Christian ethos and values which underpin the life of the school. Effective governor involvement is evident in their commitment to hold school leaders to account. They ensure that the wellbeing and best outcomes for all pupils are at the heart of decisions about provision and funding. There is evidence that, over time, school leaders have not given equal priority to ensuring that structures are in place to successfully monitor, assess and improve the school as a church school. This has limited the school's improvement as a church school. However, significant work by staff began in the summer term last year to re-focus on and develop the school's Christian vision, ethos and values. This has included refreshing the school's vision statement, making its mission statement more accessible to pupils and introducing the sixth value, respect. These initiatives were shared with pupils, parents and governors during the autumn term. Previous engagement by members of the school's senior leadership with the Church of England's programmes for church school leadership had provided the catalyst for many of these recent developments. Senior leaders have maintained the impetus for developmental work this school year through membership of the South East church school leaders' peer support network. As a result, collaborative projects are underway, to the benefit of both Holy Trinity and St John's school and its partner schools. Following changes in leadership over a number of years, both RE and collective worship have been prioritised this year by giving their leadership to senior members of staff.

The recent appointment to the governing body of the curate of St John's church has considerably enriched the relationship between the school and the church. Links with other churches in the area and involvement alongside other schools in local events, such as the annual Christmas tree event, are clear expressions of the school being part of the wider community. Parents report that they find the school welcoming and the staff approachable. The parents', teachers' and friends' association organises regular fundraising events to enhance pupils' school experience. The school participates in the United Mothers group, an innovative project based in East Kent primary schools. Women of different faiths and cultures meet in this group, and inter-cultural relationships and understanding grow through a range of activities. The impact of this is the increase of mutual understanding and engagement between the school and its international families. Worship and RE at the school both meet statutory requirements. Areas for development from the previous inspection report have been addressed in a satisfactory manner.

SIAMS report January 2018 Holy Trinity and St John's Church of England Primary School, Margate, CT9 1LU