

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

### Bidborough Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Spring Lane, Bidborough, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN3 0UE

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Rochester</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Kent
Date of inspection	29 June 2017
Date of last inspection	21 June 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 118598
Headteacher	Julie Burton
Inspector's name and number	Patrick Boughton-Reynolds 897

#### School context

Bidborough Church of England primary school is a one-form entry school of 210 pupils. It is situated in the rural village of Bidborough, with most pupils coming from the local areas. The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language and those from disadvantaged backgrounds are significantly below national averages. The number of pupils with special educational needs is below national averages. The headteacher is on a phased return to post after time off due to ill health, with the deputy headteacher acting in her stead.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bidborough primary school as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The strong Christian leadership of the school ensures that an inclusive Christian vision underpins and permeates all aspects of school life.
- Distinctive Christian values are clearly articulated by all stakeholders and are deeply 'lived out' across the whole school community.
- Christian worship expresses and develops the spirituality of the school and great value is placed upon it by all stakeholders.
- The school has strong relationships with the Diocese, education authority, and the local community that are a great support to sustaining its success.

#### Areas to improve

- Continue to develop the recently introduced approach to teaching religious education (RE).
- Expand the evaluation and leadership of worship to wider groups of pupils.
- Ensure that the school's Christian vision and values are articulated clearly in all school policies.

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

Bidborough has a clear set of Christian values that are deeply embedded in the life of the school. The school's values of love, courage, koinonia, hope and forgiveness are articulated by all stakeholders and 'lived out' fully by the school community. These shared human values are made distinctively Christian through their basis in key biblical texts. The school has designed posters, signage and artwork to illustrate this. These values have been embraced by all stakeholders. Pupils express the importance of these values in their lives in a variety of ways, from 'hoping that I'll do well' to being courageous by trying something new like 'swimming on my back for the first time'. The value of 'love' resonated as the most important value amongst the pupils. This results in excellent behaviour and also in strong friendly relationships amongst all pupils. Numerous stakeholders, especially parents and pupils, referred to the 'family feel' of the school because of the caring and nurturing environment. Pupils are cared for and taught well and therefore make progress well above national averages. The holistic progress of pupils is of utmost importance to leaders, teachers and support staff. The Christian character of the school underpins its provision to enable all pupils to flourish, particularly the provision for disadvantaged pupils and those with special education needs. Parents appreciate this, as one parent remarked, 'I have absolute faith (in the school), that when I let go of their hand, in the morning, they will be cared for in every aspect'. Pupils are happy in the school and, as a result, attendance is excellent. One parent commented that her child 'has a big smile going to school and a big smile leaving.'

RE has a high profile in the school and quality teaching, using new approaches to the subject, enables pupils to have a deeper understanding of Christianity. Pupils have seen this improvement. One pupil remarked, 'now we really have to think more in RE'. The new approaches to the teaching of RE, especially Christianity have yet to become fully embedded. Teaching about other faiths, supported by trips to the mosque, the synagogue and the gurdwara make a significant contribution to the strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils. This in turn fosters a deeper understanding of and respect for diverse communities. The school values have a wide impact, with the school community reaching out to 'love their neighbour' in the global context. The school works with the parish on its 'Blink' partnership with the community of Kibaigwa in Tanzania. Fundraising for this has enabled visits between both communities.

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

Worship is central to the life of the school and great value is placed upon it by all stakeholders. Worship is engaging, inspirational, and distinctively Christian. It is enjoyed and appreciated by the whole school community, particularly pupils and staff. Sung worship, every Thursday, is particularly moving for all involved and provides a source of spiritual nourishment to many stakeholders. Worship is creative, using song, dance, sign language and role play of biblical texts to engage pupils deeply. One Year 5 pupil explained the importance of acting out bible stories as enabling 'the little ones to know what's going on.' Each class has created their own cross and this is carried to and from each collective worship by pupils. This symbolic act serves to make pupils feel welcomed and included in worship. The school develops individual spirituality through 'reflection places' and 'prayer boxes', which are used readily by pupils. This enables pupils to express their spiritual thoughts and feelings in words. Diocesan schemes are used effectively, ensuring that themes follow the liturgical calendar and that all develop their understanding of God and the person of Jesus Christ. Worship follows Anglican liturgical formats and pupils say the responses together enthusiastically.

The school has addressed a development point from the previous denominational inspection to involve all pupils more in planning and leading acts of worship. This has been done through the introduction of a 'worship leaders' programme for pupils. It has allowed more pupils to develop their understanding of worship and has enabled improvements to take place, such as the pupils coming forward to pray spontaneously. This has increased the number of pupils involved in worship and has deepened the spiritual expression of the school. However more pupils want to be involved in leading worship. This is a testimony to the important place worship has in the lives of the pupils. The school uses the local church of St. Lawrence for whole school services such as Christingle and the Leavers' service. Pupils take a lead role in these services and pupil worship leaders have prepared Pentecost prayer stations which are then utilised by the church community. The school monitors worship effectively, through formal monitoring by SMSC governors and leaders. Pupils also write a review of all collective worship and the worship coordinator keeps a detailed weekly diary of worship. This bears testimony to the rich experience of worship enjoyed by all of the school community.

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

The school's motto of 'faith in our future' is articulated clearly by the headteacher and by other leaders as being central to the inclusive vision of this church school. This vision and the school's Christian values are the driving force of school successes. One governor described the vision as 'woven into the whole tapestry of the school'. As a result, the Christian vision impacts significantly upon the lives of the pupils, their academic progress and their wellbeing. A clear success of this is that pupils have a deep understanding of the school vision that they use as guidance for their journey through school. One Year 6 boy expressed the inclusive nature of the vision as 'believe in yourself and have faith in others'. Another pupil supported a more explicitly religious view saying, 'it's about letting God guide you and having faith that people will help you.' Since the previous denominational inspection, governors and leaders have consulted with stakeholders to produce a new set of values to embody the school's character more fully. These values are fully embedded into the daily life of the school and are an intrinsic part of the identity of the whole school community as a church school. Pupils and teachers work hard to live out the values of the school, This commitment impacts upon the quality of pupil work because, as a Year 4 boy explained, 'I put love into my work'.

Governance of SMSC is a considerable strength, which has kept the school's vision and values at the forefront of school improvement. It also ensures that pupils make excellent holistic progress, not solely academic progress. The school's self-evaluation and development plan that focusses on its effectiveness as a church school is detailed and accurate. Governors ensure that strategic planning and review is robust for key aspects of school life, such as teaching and learning. This ensures that the future impact of the school's Christian character is maintained in these areas. However, not all policies are explicitly underpinned by the Christian vision and values of the school. The school has very positive relationships with the local church of St Lawrence, with the Diocese and with the wider community. These relationships enable and support its development as a church school. Strong and supportive Christian leaders and governors work collegiately to ensure that the Christian character remains at the heart of school development. Staff stepped up to a variety of leadership roles to ensure that the school ran smoothly whilst the headteacher was absent. This has positively enabled the school to develop staff as future leaders of church schools. The leadership of worship and RE is given a high priority which leads to highly effective practice in both areas. Arrangements for both RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements.

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