

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Peter's Church of England School

The Durlocks, Folkestone, Kent CT19 6AL	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Canterbury
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Kent
Date	9 July 2018
Date of last inspection	July 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	VC primary 118676
Headteacher	Toni Browne
Inspector's name and number	Anne Southgate 820

School context

St Peter's is smaller than the average sized primary school with around 107 pupils on roll. The school is adjacent to the church. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A small number of other ethnicities are represented. More pupils are supported by the pupil premium than is the case nationally. Pupil mobility is higher than in most other schools. The church is currently without a vicar following his recent and sudden death. The headteacher has recently resumed her full time role following a period of maternity leave.

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

- An explicit and extremely clear and shared Christian vision drives the approach to all aspects of school improvement.
- The exceptional care for each individual ensures that pupils achieve to the best of their ability and that they feel safe and secure at school.
- Pupils develop extremely well spiritually, morally, socially and culturally.
- School leaders and governors work very well together and feel called to serve their community.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that the firm Christian basis to everything that the school does is clear in all policies so that everyone understands this.
- Gather all pupils' views about collective worship more frequently so that their thoughts can help to bring about improvement more often.

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

The care for each individual, both child and adult, creates a secure environment where everyone achieves their best. This is very clearly and firmly rooted in the shared belief that everyone is uniquely created in the image of God. The school's Christian values of trust, endurance, forgiveness, gratitude, hope and equality are strongly grounded in Christian teaching and in biblical stories. These have a profound effect on daily life at the school. A Year 4 pupil explained that being a church school meant 'celebrating the love of God and all his gifts so everyone had to do their best'. The values raise pupils' aspirations and, as a result, attainment, progress and attendance have improved since the last denominational inspection. Pupils generally achieve standards at least in line with national expectations after entering the school with low starting points. This includes good attainment in religious education (RE). Pupils enjoy learning about a variety of beliefs and gaining a deeper understanding of Christianity. Good achievement is supported strongly by the exceptional support for individual pupils and their families. This means that the school is a secure environment where pupils, including the most vulnerable, can flourish.

The school environment and the frequent use of the church help pupils to reflect on their behaviour, attitudes and aspirations. The values are widely displayed around the school. Pupils often refer to them and their behaviour is excellent as a result. Pupils understand that 'God made everyone different' and show real respect for others. Pupils are clear that they should 'love our neighbour'. This means that they are keen to help others who are different from themselves. They are very aware that there are Christians around the world. In the Reception class this is aided by having two 'Christian' dolls who meet and ask questions of people with different beliefs. Those without a belief in God also appreciate the values and the times of quiet. A Year 5 pupil commented, 'I like the time to think about my life'. The school is therefore highly inclusive and everyone feels valued. Pupils make frequent use of the prayer spaces in school. They very often ask for prayers to be said for themselves and for others. This includes prayers for global events, such as the rescue of the Thai boys from the flooded caves. Pupils develop empathy very well and show genuine concern for others. The frequent times of quiet, prayer, and reflection, ensure that pupils have a depth of experience and that they develop very well spiritually. There are a wide range of school visits. These ensure that many pupils have new experiences such as attending a carol service at St Martin's in the Fields in London. All pupils' talents are valued and supported by a very wide variety of clubs. Arts are particularly strong, as exemplified by the achievement of Arts Award Platinum. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is a real strength.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

St Peter's is very much a worshipping community. Great value is placed on the time that the school gathers together to worship each day. The regular use of the church is extremely beneficial and pupils' sense of reverence, awe and wonder is palpable. The stillness which pupils experience in church is taken back into school so that they are calm and ready to learn. Collective worship also takes place in classrooms and in the hall. These acts of worship mirror those in the church and are equally effective. Pupils are very actively engaged in worship. Individual pupils say the Anglican gathering and sending sentences and often read from the Bible. Classes often lead collective worship and a group of pupil worship leaders regularly plans and leads worship for younger pupils. Pupils sing hymns with confidence, often unaccompanied. A choir sing beautifully and help to create a sense of worship being a special and sacred time. Prayer is the beating heart of the school. Pupils of all ages volunteer to offer prayers during collective worship. They do so with confidence and sincerity. Pupils therefore are fully involved in planning and leading collective worship. The school mirrors the tradition of the church. Pupils make the sign of the cross as they pray. This supports their strong understanding of the belief that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Colours are used to represent different times of the church's year and Christian festivals, including St Peter's Day, are celebrated. Pupils enjoy acting the events of Holy Week. Their knowledge of these is enhanced by the stations of the cross in the church. There are school Eucharists throughout the year and these are often well attended by parents. A significant number of pupils at the school are prepared for confirmation. The whole school community attends the confirmation service and regards this as a joyous celebration. Pupils therefore have an exceptional grasp of local Anglican traditions. There was a very strong and positive partnership with the late vicar. The school community was shocked and deeply saddened by his sudden death. Christian faith and collective worship led to mutual support, which has sustained the school community through their bereavement. Pupils have responded by creating a prayer box to collect their prayers for him and by raising money to create a permanent memorial in school. Pupils display genuine concern for others. Their prayers in worship are often followed by action, such as

joining with the church during Lent to support Tear Fund.

Class teachers or pupils lead key stage and class worship. The vicar previously led church collective worship and this is now led by senior school leaders. A local vicar from a different tradition visited the school and explained the breadth of traditions within Anglicanism. Pupils therefore have some experience of varying styles of worship. One of the school's Christian values forms the focus for each term. This ensures that pupils grasp the Christian basis on which the values are founded. Governors and school leaders actively and effectively monitor collective worship. This has brought about improvements, such as widening the types of music and variety of Anglican sentences used. Pupils are not formally asked for their views, although they often contribute their thoughts voluntarily.

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

The headteacher has ensured that school improvement is very clearly driven by Christian principles. All leaders, including governors, share an exceptionally well thought out and explicit Christian vision. They aim to recognise the dignity of each human being as a child of God and made in his image. This has a real impact on the approach to all that the school does. This is exemplified in the care and support extended to pupils and their families. This is not always clear in school policies, many of which do not spell out the Christian principles on which they are based. Governors work very closely with senior leaders to monitor and evaluate the school's effectiveness as a church school. They have a secure knowledge of the school's progress and make very helpful contributions to developing the school still further. Leaders therefore work as a mutually supportive team with a common goal to improve the life chances of local children. The views of parents and pupils are sought. These are very largely positive as families genuinely appreciate the impact of the Christian character of pupils' behaviour and learning. Leaders' Christian vision has an impact on the whole curriculum. As a result, learning often includes reference to Christian values and to achieving one's best. Pupils are given time to reflect and to consider their answers. This means that leaders have established an environment in which pupils are enabled to flourish.

The partnership with the church has been very strong and beneficial. This has supported both pupils and adults, including parents. Daily access to the church has meant individuals can, for example, light a candle and pray at times of need. The diocese has been a key support to school leaders following the loss of the vicar. Diocesan support has also aided the development of the mission statement and preparation for the new RE syllabus. The school also works closely and effectively with local church schools. St Peter's has a prominent position in the local community. The school is active in local events, such as the carnival and the blessing of the fisheries. Parents are welcomed and feel part of the school community. Teachers are immersed in a genuine Christian ethos, where leaders feel called to serve the local community. Leaders freely articulate the Christian foundation to their work. This means that teachers develop very well as future church school leaders. An example is that the Assistant Headteacher has secured promotion in another church school. RE and worship are led very well by the headteacher and a senior leader. This demonstrates the importance that the school places on these areas. The headteacher has ensured that statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are fully met. She has addressed the development points from the last denominational inspection. She takes developing the school further as a church school very seriously.

SIAMS report July 2018 St Peter's Folkestone CT19 6AL