

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Hartlip Endowed Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

The Street, Hartlip, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME9 7TL

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Diocese

Canterbury

Previous SIAS inspection grade

Good

Local authority

Kent

Date of inspection

8 March 2017

Date of last inspection

March 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

Endowed - Voluntary Aided - 118734

Headteacher

Tracey Jerome

Inspector's name and number

Pamela Draycott (161)

School context

This smaller than average primary school has a Reception class plus three classes each with two year groups. Most pupils are White British. There is a small but growing percentage from other ethnic backgrounds. A considerable Traveller community is represented. The percentage for whom additional funding is received due to social disadvantage is below the national average, contrasted to the percentage of those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) which is higher. A small percentage of families attend church regularly outside of their involvement through school. This is growing through new initiatives which encourage more family participation in services.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Hartlip Endowed Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The excellent Christian leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, ably supported by governors and dedicated staff, directs and inspires all aspects of school improvement.
- The meaningful links between the school and the church make a significant contribution to the school's spiritual life.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes to learning are founded on their understanding and use of the school's core Christian values of forgiveness, trust, peace, friendship and thankfulness.
- Pupils are well known and cared for as 'unique, children of God', and as a consequence are treated respectfully and as individuals.
- The worship programme is varied and clearly focuses on exploring key areas of Christian belief and practice and provides relevant experiences, closely linked to their impact on life and living in today's world.

Areas to improve

- Embed recent changes to the school's religious education (RE) curriculum, so that approaches to learning based on enquiry and deep questioning consistently inform teaching and learning.

- Refine marking and assessment practices in RE so that pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are working and, specifically, of what they need to do in order to improve further.

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

The school's core Christian values inform all aspects of its life. They are clearly linked with Christian teaching and appropriate biblical references. These values are expressed by all members of the school community. 'They are Christian values because there are stories in the Bible that link to them and also what Jesus would do,' was the reflection of a Year 6 pupil. The school's declared aim is that it seeks to be, 'a happy place, with a welcoming atmosphere, built in mutual respect, with confidence and understanding between parents, children, staff and governors'. This is deeply expressed and leads to strong relationships which are evident across the school. Overall behaviour is very good. On those few occasions where pupils do not live up to the high standards expected, the school works effectively on resolving issues based on the individual's needs. In a clear expression of its Christian ethos, pupils are eager to learn. They are excited and challenged by their learning, explaining that they find lessons fun. Pupils enter broadly at age-related expected levels and, throughout the school, most make good or better progress from their various starting points. This is because the school is aspirational for its pupils and sets high standards for them. The progress of individuals is regularly and closely mapped, with appropriate interventions put in place. Pupils work well collaboratively and individually and share ideas openly, within an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect. Consequently, standards of attainment, especially in mathematics and literacy, have improved significantly since the time of the previous denominational inspection. The attainment of SEND pupils and those from disadvantaged backgrounds has improved so that they are now making broadly similar progress to their peers. Through compassionate and consistent approaches, based on the school's Christian values, attendance has improved so that it is currently slightly above the national average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is well catered for and pupils respond well to the opportunities provided. The curriculum is broad and balanced with successful approaches that encourage reflection and creativity evident. Pupils take responsibility for themselves and for others through, for example, Year 6 helpers supporting Reception pupils and through the worship council. They understand charitable giving to be an expression of Jesus' teaching to 'love your neighbour' and as a way of saying 'thank you to God for everything you have' according to a Year 4 pupil. Pupils benefit from a range of extra-curricular activities and visits that support their academic, personal and social development well. RE makes a significant contribution to pupils' SMSC development and to the school's distinctive Christian character. For example, through RE pupils develop respect for the beliefs of others, recognising that 'it's OK to be different and to believe different things' as commented on by a Year 6 pupil. Prayer is used at different times of the day, including at lunchtime and for five minutes towards the end of the school day. At this time each class reflects on their day together. This contributes positively to their spiritual development. Through the RE curriculum and through links with the parish church and benefice, pupils are developing an age-appropriate understanding of Christianity as a world-wide, multi-cultural faith. Their mutual support for a Christian school in Uganda is an expression of this.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is a highly valued and an integral feature of the school's daily life. Pupils' attitudes are extremely positive because they feel included and involved. They especially enjoy singing and being able to 'join in at the front' which engages them very well. As an expression of its importance, worship is well planned around clear themes which explore aspects of Christian belief and practice based on biblical teaching, Christian festivals and the school's core Christian values. These plans are appropriately adapted to take into account events in the school and world-wide as they occur. Through worship, pupils develop a good knowledge of the life and teaching of Jesus and of his importance to Christians. They make effective links between parables, Christian values and their own actions. Pupils effectively link Bible stories with the

school's Christian values, for example linking the story of Jesus calming the storm with peace and the story of Peter walking on the water with trust. Pupils have a very good appreciation of the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which has been a particular focus in worship across this academic year. The worship council is the forum through which pupils are closely involved in planning, leading and evaluating the worship programme. The group takes full responsibility for 'Trinity Tuesday' worship each week. It is having a significant impact on the continued improvement of worship, despite the relatively short time it has been in existence. Strong links between the school and the church effectively support the spiritual growth of all members of the school community. Governors, including the vicar, are regular visitors and are well involved in the worship programme. Pupils are familiar with aspects of traditional Anglican worship practices, such as a lit candle representing Jesus as the light of the world, different coloured coverings to mark times of the Christian year, and opening and closing sentences with responses. Prayer and reflection are key features of worship. A prayer display in each classroom and in the entrance area are well used by pupils. Any written prayers from these areas are taken to church for Friday worship. Pupils demonstrate their understanding of the purpose of prayer for both public and private use. Pupils know the school prayer as well as the Lord's Prayer. Many are confident in leading prayer during worship time. Pupils and staff engage well in worship

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

As a core subject, RE has an appropriately high profile across the school. Pupils' attitudes towards RE are very positive because they enjoy it. They are inspired by the good range of activities and approaches used to help them to learn. They investigate key questions and concepts and develop essential skills such as reflection, interpretation and analysis. A very good balance is achieved between learning which focuses on knowledge and understanding and that which encourages reflection and application of religious beliefs and practices. Pupils are challenged to consider and to exchange views openly and respectfully within a caring and supportive learning environment. Teaching is consistently good and supports standards of attainment that are at least equal to those achieved in subjects such as literacy and mathematics. Pupils make good progress from their various starting points. This is evidenced well through their written and oral work in RE. Marking is done regularly by teachers and forms part of the assessment and tracking process. However, this is not rigorous enough or set against agreed criteria for attainment and progress closely enough. Subject leadership is driving curriculum developments purposefully. Development planning indicates that the subject leader has a clear and accurate picture of areas to develop further. The RE curriculum has recently been revised so that the new approaches taken allow for pupils to explore the content under consideration through enquiry. Pupils and staff are responding positively to these changes but they are not embedded consistently into practice. A variety of tasks and approaches are used to aid learning. However, there are occasions when these are not specifically linked to challenging and supporting pupils of different ages and abilities in the same class. This slows progress to some extent. Effective monitoring and evaluation by senior leaders and governors leads to improvements in teaching and learning which impact strongly on pupils' attitudes and achievement.

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

The very strong focus on agreed Christian values inspires and drives all aspects of school improvement. The headteacher, ably supported by her deputy and governors, has developed the school's Christian distinctiveness very well since the previous denominational inspection. The three key issues for improvement have been closely addressed. There is a clear vision for future development, based on encouraging all pupils to flourish as 'children of God'. All members of the school family feel valued and they are very well supported. As a result, staff morale is high and all work collaboratively to achieve shared goals. Staff are well supported for working within the church school sector. Governors challenge and support the work of the school very effectively. The Mary Gibbon Trust originally formed the school in the late 17th century and it continues to be valued and supportive. As a reflection of this flowers are placed on her grave which is in the churchyard next to the school at the founder's day service. Robust monitoring and evaluation processes lead to accurate self-evaluation. Church school issues are clearly and accurately

identified and prioritised within whole school improvement planning. Governors have secured very good leadership for both RE and worship. These areas are appropriately resourced and supported and meet statutory requirements. Good use is made of links with the parish church and with other primary schools locally. The school draws well on support offered by the Diocese by taking part in training and development opportunities.

SIAMS report (March 2017) Hartlip Endowed CE (VA), Hartlip, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME9 7TL