

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Sulhamstead and Ufton Nervet Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Church Lane Ufton Nervet Reading Berkshire RG7 4HH

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Oxford
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	West Berkshire
Date of inspection	23 January 2018
Date of last inspection	12 February 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided Primary 110021
Headteacher	Daryl Jordan
Inspector's name and number	Gill Walley 644

School context

There are 107 pupils on roll in vertically grouped classes. The school has close links with the parish church and was judged to be Good by Ofsted in June 2017. Most pupils enter with above average ability, most are white British and from a comfortable background. The proportion with English as an additional language, Special Educational Needs/Disabilities or who receive free school meals is below average. The school is oversubscribed and few pupils leave part way through their time here. The school has experienced uncertainty in leadership in recent years. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2017. The incumbent of the parish church is also new to post.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Sulhamstead and Ufton Nervet as a Church of England school are good.

- Distinctively Christian values drive the school's work so that pupils make good progress academically, and develop their full potential socially, emotionally and spiritually.
- Despite the uncertainty surrounding leadership in recent years leaders have maintained and strengthened the Christian distinctiveness of the school and are focussed on continuous improvement.
- Parents, pupils and staff identify the values which underpin and promote the school's mission statement and can explain their biblical context.
- There are strong links with the parish church so that pupils feel part of the local community and begin to understand the nature of Christian worship.

Areas to improve

- Celebrate the Christian distinctiveness of the school in documentation so that parents and visitors are fully aware that it is this distinctiveness which underpins the school's work and intentions.
- Develop a strong relationship with the new incumbent so that he can strengthen the Christian distinctiveness of the school by helping pupils to gain a deeper understanding of Christian liturgy and by increasing the links between the school and the parish church.

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

Pupils, staff, governors and parents have worked together to choose six values on which to focus. These are friendship and forgiveness, compassion, trust, thankfulness, peace and fellowship and community. Pupils can identify several Bible stories or passages which illustrate each value because they have learnt about the values in a Biblical context. They explain how to apply the values to their lives and how the school acknowledges the times when they show a value in their behaviour. For example, they refer to showing compassion when they make up with a friend after an argument and know that God has compassion for them when they say sorry. Although the Christian distinctiveness is not always celebrated in the school's documentation, the response to issues such as attendance and behaviour management are determined by the school's care and compassion for its pupils and families. Its determination to support every pupil to achieve his or her full potential ensures that they make good progress. The values are now mentioned regularly and pupils are rewarded when they show a value towards one another. They are displayed around the building as a reminder of their importance. They are linked well to special events. For example, peace was talked about when pupils were observing Remembrance Day. Staff say, 'the church and our Christian values are embedded in everything we do'. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and attendance is good. They say they feel well cared for and that adults will always help them, and 'everyone gets along and works together'. Pupils can explain the religious significance of the school's logo. Their behaviour is impeccable and they show profound respect for one another. Parents feel their children are safe and very well nurtured to achieve their potential and like the 'family feel' and 'caring environment'. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development as well as opportunities to learn about different cultures through visits to places of worship and learning from Christians of African origin. They value learning about Religious Education (RE) because it helps them to know more about Christianity as a multicultural world faith and about the faiths of other people in the wider community.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.

Pupils and adults feel that worship is the most important part of the day because it unites them and develops their understanding of the Christian faith in ways which are engaging and relevant. Drama, music and props are used well to bring worship alive and make it memorable. Pupils always play a very active role and thoroughly enjoy taking part. Once a week the Junior Worship team plan, lead and evaluate the act of worship entirely by themselves. Worship develops their spirituality well because opportunities are given for pupils to reflect and to understand how to relate what they have discussed to their own lives. For example, after learning about the story of David and Goliath they talked about how and when they can put their trust in God. They then thought of other passages in the Bible which talk about trust such as Daniel in the Lion's Den. Collective worship develops pupils' understanding of the Christian faith well. Christian prayers and greetings are used and pupils recite the school's mission statement as a reminder of the school's main purpose. Bible stories and passages are used to reinforce this understanding and pupils explain that the three candles which are lit at the beginning of each act of worship remind them of God as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Older pupils understand the centrality of Jesus and the events of His life. They know the seasons of the liturgical year and are developing an understanding of different traditions such as baptism between different denominations. Pupils write and readily share their own prayers, both in whole school worship and in class and they pray together during the day. Each classroom has a well used prayer and reflection corner, with a book of prayers they have written themselves and can share with one another. These areas also contain artefacts for them to handle, Bibles and displays of their work about topics they have discussed in RE lessons. Worship is well planned to develop pupils' understanding of each value over a period of several weeks. Different members of staff and the parish worker lead worship so that pupils experience different approaches. Worship is always evaluated so that leaders are sure that it is meaningful. It is monitored by governors as well as senior leaders so that governors have a good understanding of its impact on pupils and can identify aspects which could be developed further. Pupils who are not from a Christian background say they are respected and fully involved in worship and able to contribute as much as they wish to. They say the values are the right ones for everyone to live by, irrespective of their own beliefs. Parents also say they feel completely included and involved. They enjoy attending worship both in school and in the parish church. The school now aims to develop a strong relationship with the newly appointed incumbent to further strengthen the mutual partnership with the parish church and to enable pupils to gain a deeper understanding of Christian liturgy.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

Pupils make good progress in RE and often reach levels above those expected for their age. This is because teachers assess their understanding well and identify the next steps in their learning. Teaching is vibrant and engages pupils well. Teachers help them to improve their work and reflect on how they might improve. Teachers have very high expectations of what the pupils will achieve. Pupils discuss their views with confidence and are tolerant of one

another's opinions. They are encouraged to challenge different views and to become open-minded. Older pupils enjoy discussing questions which have no straightforward answer. RE reinforces pupils' understanding of the Christian faith through learning about Bible stories, Parables and the life and teaching of Christ. They also develop their understanding of other world faiths. Pupils say this helps them to be tolerant and respectful of the beliefs of others around them. They visit places of worship such as a Hindu Temple and a Rabbi has visited which have given pupils some first-hand experiences of how people of other faiths worship. Pupils enjoy RE and teachers often link it with other curriculum areas such as art, drama and writing. For example, pupils make sculptures when learning about Moses and the burning bush. It supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The profile of RE has improved over time and the RE leader supports her colleagues well so that they are confident to teach the subject with appealing resources which bring the subject to life. Governors and senior leaders monitor RE closely and identify actions for further improvement. They work well with the diocese to review and implement new initiatives, for example in the assessment of pupils' achievements.

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

Despite a period of uncertainty, governors and interim leaders have been resolute in maintaining and strengthening the distinctive character of the school. Governors have ensured that preserving the Christian distinctiveness was their highest priority. They feel that the Christian distinctiveness has held everyone together through the uncertainty. It has also driven the improvements in teaching and learning so that pupils are now making more rapid and sustained progress. Governors and leaders have worked in close partnership with the diocese through difficult times and they continue to monitor the distinctiveness closely to ensure that it remains its core strength. They have considered succession planning and the professional development of staff so that the Christian distinctiveness is maintained. They have recently attended a Values day in school to see how the values are integrated into the life of the school in every respect, and how they are reflected in the pupils' behaviour and attitudes. The new headteacher has evaluated the school accurately and made rapid improvements so that the values are becoming completely embedded. He has united all groups within the school by working with them to review the mission statement 'love to learn... learn to love'. The headteacher has continued to strengthen the leadership of worship and RE because these areas are of the highest priority. His vision determines pupils' progress and personal development. He has begun to make a link with a multicultural church school nearby to broaden the pupils' understanding of their wider community. He is an excellent role model for staff and pupils. The Christian ethos underpins the school's work and informs the curriculum. Parents feel that the school has a family atmosphere where they and their children are very well supported. They like the fact that children are invited but not forced to learn more about the Christian faith, and encouraged to ask questions. They appreciate the improvements which the new headteacher has made and the extent to which parents have been consulted and involved. The environment has been improved greatly to reflect the Christian character of the school and pupils have helped to design a new peace garden where they can be calm and reflective. Worship and RE meet statutory requirements. Groups within the church community are now working together on local events for their mutual benefit. Pupils contribute to church life, for example by attending the dedication of the new window and taking part in the annual retreat. The recommendations of the last inspection report have been met.

SIAMS report January 2018 Sulhamstead and Ufton Nervet CE Voluntary Aided Primary School, Ufton Nervet, Reading RG7 4HH