

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

### Horsley Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

The Street, Horsley, Stroud. GL6 0PU

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Gloucester</b>
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Date/s of inspection	8 February 2017
Date of last inspection	28 February 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 115685
Headteacher	Gary Price
Inspector's name and number	Karen Surrall 842

#### School context

Horsley Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is a smaller than average primary school situated at the heart of the village of Horsley. It has had three head teachers in the last two years with the current substantive head taking up post in September 2016. The number of disadvantaged pupils is significantly below the national average while those with special educational needs or disabilities is similar to the national average. Attainment on entry is broadly in line with the national average. A new Religious Education (RE) lead took up post in January 2017.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Horsley VA Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

- The new headteacher has clearly identified the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, leaders have a strong vision for the school and an understanding as to how to move the school forward based on its distinctive Christian character and Christian values.
- The physical environment of the school vibrantly supports the school's Christian ethos, with imaginative and creative art work encouraging reflection and application of the school's Christian values.
- The governors know the school well and use this knowledge to ensure that there are good outcomes for pupils.

#### Areas to improve

- Improve the quality of teaching in religious education (RE) so that RE makes a good contribution to the children's understanding of the Christian values of the school and to learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development.
- Ensure the Christian character of the school, particularly the teaching of RE, promotes an understanding of and respect for the diversity and difference within other faith communities.
- Enable pupils to plan and lead collective worship more frequently so that it has a discernible impact on their spiritual journey.
- Ensure that the monitoring of both RE and collective worship is sufficiently rigorous to enable the impact of changes to be identified.

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

The school's Christian values are prominently displayed around school and on the school's website, clearly showing how they are important to the whole school community. The school's vision 'Nurturing to grow and thrive' was agreed by all stakeholders and its Christian foundation is clearly expressed on the school website. Governors take seriously the need to make decisions based on the school's Christian character so that all stakeholders can identify how these values affect the daily lives and achievements of all learners. Ensuring that learners, including those who are more vulnerable, achieve their very best is understood by leaders, staff and parents to be a practical outworking of the school's Christian ethos. As a result, pupils achieve well at Horsley, whatever their starting points, compared to other children nationally. Governors are aware that attendance must improve for some groups of pupils. They are careful to apply the school's policy rigorously and fairly, so that parents and children understand the importance of attending school regularly.

There is a real sense of community at Horsley school and this is identified by all stakeholders as being a great strength. It has resulted in some creative art projects which are beautifully displayed around school and support the school's Christian ethos extremely well. Pupils are proud of these works of art and their own contribution to them. The link with the church is especially prized, being described as 'completely intertwined and integral to the life of the school' by parents. Parents appreciate how the links between home and school are increasingly focussed on the values. For example, each child has taken home a paper dove and parents can share times when their child has displayed one of the values at home. These are then laminated and displayed in school. Consequently, the school's Christian values are reflected in many aspects of school and home life.

The head has encouraged staff to explore their interpretation of spirituality and there is a growing understanding of how the RE curriculum and the wider curriculum can support pupils' personal spiritual journey. This work is not embedded enough to enable the school's Christian values to have a significant impact on learners' SMSC understanding.

Children behave well and this is universally acknowledged to be rooted in the school's Christian character and Christian values. Learners enjoy nominating each other for showing the school's values in daily life so that they are awarded a leaf on the values tree, prominently displayed in the church. Staff know the pupils well and take great care to minister to their social and emotional needs. There is a long-established buddy system between the older and younger children. Consequently, this is a school where community is strong and all stakeholders uphold the school's Christian vision. 'The Christian values are prevalent, they saturate the school and enhance the children's learning' reported one parent.

Pupils generally enjoy RE lessons and understand that it is important to learn about different faiths and cultures so that as they get older they will be tolerant and respectful to other people. 'RE helps us to make the right choices' explained a year 5 child. Whilst there are some links made between the teaching in RE and the school's Christian values, these are not consistent enough to make a significant contribution to pupils' SMSC development or to the Christian character of the school. At present, the Christian character of the school, particularly the teaching of RE, promotes only a limited understanding of and respect for the diversity and difference within other faith communities.

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

Collective worship always takes place in the church and this has created a deep association between the church and the school which is appreciated by all stakeholders. The clergy team are important people in the life of the school and much of the school's Christian character is underpinned by their work. Pupils place much value on the work of the Open the Book team and Messy Church. Children see collective worship as important and they enjoy the times of reflection and prayer. They see these as times that 'make people think that God is with them'.

Worship begins with the lighting of three candles and children can link this with the concept of the Trinity. The church colours are displayed so that the children understand some of the Anglican elements used during worship. Collective worship is meticulously planned so that themes support the school's Christian values and explicit links are made to the life of Jesus and biblical teaching. There is regular monitoring of collective worship by both the collective worship lead and by governors. Consequently, leaders have a good understanding of where improvements need to be made and how to achieve them but these ideas are not always followed up robustly enough in a way that ensures that actions are completed and impact assessed. Pupils are ready and willing to plan and lead times of collective worship but are not currently able to do so frequently enough.

Prayer holds a special place in the life of the school and pupils are increasingly using prayer in their own lives as well as in school. They enjoy using the prayer box where prayers can be written and left by anyone in school. These are then read out during worship times. The recently installed reflection areas in each classroom are giving the children an increased understanding of the value of prayer and reflection in daily life. However, the use of these is not sufficiently embedded within the daily life of the school to have an impact on pupils' SMSC development. Younger

children easily identify how the teachings around the current values make a difference to their own behaviour and those of other people. 'Everyone wants to get a leaf on the values tree' was the general view of the KSI school council. Older children like being complimented by peers, staff and parents through both the leaves and the doves. These simple initiatives have ensured that collective worship has an impact on all aspects of school life.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory**

The school is currently moving from one locally agreed syllabus to another and this has led to a period of uncertainty in the delivery of the RE curriculum. Standards of attainment for most pupils meet age related expectations but more able children are not challenged enough so that they can reach their full potential. Assessment procedures are not sufficiently embedded to show progress over time. Marking and feedback to pupils does not always either highlight next steps in learning or encourage pupils to think more deeply about what they have learnt.

Learners generally enjoy RE and can see the relevance of lessons in their daily lives. The new syllabus is increasingly being used to teach a range of skills so that in classes where teaching is good, children are being enabled to think more deeply. This results in pupils being able to ponder some of life's more difficult questions such as 'Is it better for God to be holy or loving?' However, across the school, teachers are not planning lessons that will enable learners to apply their learning in their own lives and in the light of the school's Christian values.

RE teaches pupils about Christianity and about other faiths and religions. Their knowledge is sometimes limited to a simple understanding of how religions are practiced. This means that they have a limited capacity to discuss the impact that this has on the daily lives of believers or how they might apply the school's Christian values to their own lives. Learners have a limited understanding of and respect for the diversity and difference within other faith communities.

The monitoring of RE has not been either rigorous or frequent enough to ensure teaching and learning is good across the school. It has led to some improvement in assessment systems but these are not yet embedded enough to accurately show the progress of pupils. Governors and the new RE lead both have a clear understanding of the urgent need for improvement.

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

The new headteacher is driving the school forward with energy and passion. He has a very clear vision for the school based on distinctively Christian values and he is ably supported in the delivery of this by the governors. This has given a renewed impetus to the desire to make the school's Christian values at the heart of all its work. Leaders have a good understanding of the school's performance and this leads directly to effective school improvement planning that is driving the school forward. The school has worked assiduously and effectively on the development points from the last inspection resulting in a vision for the school that is clearly focused on the school's distinctive Christian character.

The collective worship lead has ensured that assemblies fully support the school's Christian values and these are seen by all stakeholders to have an impact on the behaviour and attitudes of learners and increasingly their SMSC development. Leaders are fully aware that the teaching in RE does not currently have the same impact on the school's distinctive Christian values or pupils' SMSC development. Support and training is in place for the new RE lead. There are good relationships with the diocese and governors have ensured that both they and other leaders within the school understand their roles and responsibilities as leaders of a church school. Relationships and partnerships within the school and with the church benefit learners so that they contribute well to the local community. For example, year 6 children planned and hosted a sandwich lunch for older people in the community and have raised funds for the Salvation Army. They have limited understanding of national and global communities. The school meets statutory requirements for collective worship and RE.

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