

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Colliers Green (Voluntary Aided) Church of England Primary School

Colliers Green, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 2LR	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Canterbury
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Kent
Date/s of inspection	15 June 2018
Date of last inspection	10 July 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided primary 118716
Headteacher	Nicola Hirst
Inspector's name and number	Jane Garrett 618

School context

Colliers Green is a smaller than average school with 112 children on roll. Pupils come from Cranbrook and surrounding villages in the Weald of Kent. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils in receipt of extra support provided by pupil premium is very low at 0.9%. There are a variety of different social and economic backgrounds represented within the school. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is 15%. The school has four classes, including three with mixed age groups.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Colliers Green Church of England school are good

- The inspiring leadership of the headteacher is starting to ensure that the Christian ethos of the school permeates all aspects of school life.
- The central role which worship plays in the life of the school enriches the spiritual lives of all pupils and is having an impact on the way in which they live their lives, both at home and school.
- The inclusive nature of the school values all pupils and their families in a warm, safe and welcoming Christian environment.

Areas to improve

- Review the biblical application of the school's Christian values so that pupils have a deeper understanding of them.
- Ensure that the school's Christian values are explicit in written documentation and on the school website.
- Develop the role of governors in enhancing strengths and identifying areas for improvement, including within worship, so that they drive the strategic direction of the school in partnership with the senior leadership team.
- Develop an awareness of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith, so that pupils gain an understanding of its richness, diversity and breadth.

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

The school's values are aspiration, resilience and community. Pupils are beginning to identify these qualities when looking at characters and stories from the Bible and to apply them to everyday situations. As yet however, these values are not specifically linked to Bible stories and they are not yet secure. The Christian ethos has begun to have a strong focus on Bible teaching and the life of Jesus and is actively and effectively promoted. One pupil explained that resilience brought Jesus through the crucifixion. The school is a happy, friendly, inclusive and welcoming community. Attendance is currently 96.6% well above the national average. This shows that pupils feel loved and cared for. They show kindness and respect for one another and this is modelled by adults and adopted by the pupils. For example, if anyone is distressed other pupils will offer care and support them. Older children are encouraged to care for younger children through a buddy system. Staff work very much as a team to provide both academic and emotional support for children and families. Parents say that, since the arrival of the new headteacher, there is a stronger emphasis on Christian values and this influences the way in which pupils behave towards one another. Standards of attainment are good with pupils making good progress from their starting points. This is reflected in the school's self-evaluation documents and in national assessment data. Effort is made to support pupils of all abilities and needs which means that all pupils have the opportunity to achieve their potential academically. Pupils' academic and spiritual development is enhanced by an exciting and motivating curriculum which includes a forest school in grounds next to the school. This provides pupils with many exciting opportunities, such as making pancakes on an open fire on Shrove Tuesday and beating the bounds at Rogation tide. It encourages them to explore ideas, work co-operatively and develop independence. Prayer is a regular feature of school life and so pupils feel very much that this is a natural activity. There are some creative opportunities for personal prayer and reflection through the use of reflective areas, the forest school and pavilion, helping pupils to develop spirituality through the natural world. After a recent family tragedy, pupils' response was to spontaneously pray for them. There are very few children from different cultures or faiths. However, pupils say that they talk together about similarities and differences and that they treat everyone the same, just as Jesus did. Pupils have a limited understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith. Pupils express their enjoyment of religious education (RE) and the impact that it has on their lives. Consequently, the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils is of a very good standard. The school values are starting to inspire pupils and help them to gain an awareness of those less fortunate than themselves, for example by contributing to Children in Need and NSPCC. Locally, pupils support a local food bank, visit a care home and participate in Remembrance day events which means that pupils are aware of local needs.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Daily collective worship is highly valued. It is seen by pupils and by adults as an integral part of the school's life. It is well planned and organised on a weekly basis. The values are addressed through collective worship themes. This has helped to start to embed them into the life of the school and to put the moral messages from worship into action in pupils' lives. Through worship, pupils have an understanding of biblical material and of Christian teaching. This includes a developing and age-related understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils recently made a 'Trinity Tree' and drew pictures to illustrate the Trinity, comparing it to a variety of everyday objects such as a trifle. Pupils confidently contribute to a rich and inclusive variety of worship experiences, such as by leading acts of worship that stimulate prayer and reflection, the use of multimedia, drama and music. Worship includes Anglican liturgy, singing and liturgical colours. This is enhanced by the main seasons and festivals of the church's year. There are increasing opportunities to experience different worship styles from other Christian traditions. The incumbent takes worship regularly and a lay minister from Goudhurst church takes worship weekly. He leads a thriving weekly extra-curricular 'Godly play' club, re-enforcing the RE curriculum and worship themes. This augments children's understanding of the Bible and its practical application. A group of pupils contribute to the planning, leading, monitoring and evaluation of worship, fulfilling an area for development from the previous denominational inspection. They are particularly aware of the needs of different groups of children in the school. They have discussed how to make activities appropriate for all worshippers and the best methods to convey a message. Governors do not yet monitor worship and so there is not yet a systematic approach for capturing and responding to the evaluation of worship by all members of the school community

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Standards are broadly in line with other core subjects and effective assessment procedures are in place, so addressing a developmental point from the previous denominational inspection. RE is taught using 'Understanding Christianity' and the new Kent agreed syllabus. Due to focused leadership and a programme of training and development, there has been a considerable improvement in the effectiveness of RE. As a result, staff confidence has grown and developed so that teaching and learning is now good or better. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of aspects of Christianity are good. Pupils respond positively and thoughtfully to 'big' questions, and so pupils find RE interesting and challenging. They are also able to evaluate their learning and respond reflectively to it. The classroom environments reflect the importance of RE with 'working walls' to enhance and celebrate pupils' learning. One child said that she was impressed with herself because she had learnt more things about God, another that RE had changed his thoughts about God. Opportunities are made for cross curricular links, for example with art. During a Year 6 lesson, pupils asked challenging questions about a variety of artworks, what they had in common and how the characters depicted in them felt. The supportive ethos of the school creates a learning environment where pupils feel safe and included. Consequently, they feel confident to share ideas and relate what they are learning to their own lives. The major world faiths are also addressed using 'big questions' and challenge and, where possible, links are made to Christianity. For example, Reception class children discussed the synagogue and it was likened to Christians attending church. There are some opportunities for pupils to respond to marking. Additional after school clubs help to augment RE. During art club, pupils studied the work of Marc Chagall who designed some stained glass windows in a local church, so broadening and raising the relevance of RE.

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

Since the arrival of the new headteacher, the school's Christian character has started to become more explicit by directly making links between the school's values and Bible stories. She has begun to build an effective team who have initiated some significant improvements. The headteacher's vision and recognition of each child and adult as unique and special in God's sight is permeating through the life of the school. It also drives a concern to motivate and include all, with their wellbeing prioritised. However, the centrality of the Christian vision and values is not sufficiently clear in documentation. The headteacher has been proactive in bringing about improvements to the teaching of RE and the organisation and planning of collective worship. Her careful action planning has ensured that areas for development from the previous denominational inspection have been addressed, leading to improvements in both planning and provision. The school's self-evaluation is an accurate assessment of its areas of strength and ongoing improvement focus. Advice and training from the diocese has been utilised, particularly in respect of the Understanding Christianity resource. This has resulted in marked improvements in this aspect of teaching RE. There is a little evidence of formal monitoring by governors for RE. However, regular conversations with governors and with the leadership team, help to inform the development of the school. As well as a partnership with St Dunstan's church, strong links with Goudhurst church have been forged. These have enriched the spiritual life of the school and added to the children's experience of different worship styles. Relationships with parents and carers are strong. Parents rightly, 'know our children are safe, well looked after and happy'. The school works closely with other local church schools and this provides a good network and support base on which to build. The statutory requirements for collective worship and RE are fully met.

SIAMS report June 2018 Colliers Green VA Primary School, Cranbrook TN17 2LR