

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Singleton Church of England Primary School

Charlton Road, Singleton, West Sussex, PO18 0HP

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Diocese

Chichester

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Good

Local authority

West Sussex

Date of inspection

30 January 2018

Date of last inspection

10 September 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

Voluntary Controlled 125993

Headteacher

Christopher Todd

Inspector's name and number

Connie Hughes 765

School context

Singleton Church of England Primary School is a small rural school serving the villages of Singleton, Charlton and East Dean. There are currently 65 pupils on roll distributed into three classes. More than 50% of pupils are from outside the immediate catchment area with 25% of pupils joining the school on a date other than the normal point of entry. The majority of pupils are White British from a range of social and economic backgrounds. The headteacher has been in post since January 2011. The school has a close partnership with the clergy and congregation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Singleton.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Singleton as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Explicit Christian values understood and applied by all pupils, staff and governors underpin the outstanding Christian ethos of the school.
- The passionate commitment of the headteacher, actively supported by all staff and foundation governors, ensures that the love of God and applied Christian values purposefully nurture the attitudes, behaviour and well-being of all pupils.
- Collective worship and religious education, inclusive of biblical teaching, Christian values and major world faiths, strongly contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The embedded partnership between the school, the home and the church are a significant strength in celebrating the school's Christian faith foundation.

Areas to improve

- Provide more structured learning experiences for pupils to engage more fully in the prayer life of the school through, for example, the planned curriculum focus on 'prayer' and the on-going development of the spiritual garden,
- Develop the expertise of foundation governors so that they, supported by the whole governing body, develop a robust cycle of monitoring and reporting which evaluates the impact of the school's Christian distinctiveness, including daily worship, on the development of the whole child.

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

The school's unequivocal Christian ethos, founded on the love of God and an understanding of the life of Jesus, is underpinned by explicit Christian values weaved seamlessly into the daily life of the school. The stimulating and creative displays throughout the school reflect how Christian values are interwoven into everyday experiences and purposefully contribute to pupils' excellent behaviour, attendance and positive attitudes to learning. Following Jesus' commandment, 'to love your neighbour as yourself', exemplified in their core golden rule, 'treat other people how you want to be treated', clearly shapes the relationships in the daily life of the school. Parents shared, "Christian and moral values taught to our children radiate out of them, teaches them life skills and makes them nice children". Strong adult and pupil relationships enable all pupils to feel personally valued, happy and secure. Inclusive daily learning experiences and pastoral support nurture the development of the whole child; parents unanimously shared, "we see Christian values in action... the staff team are caring and supportive of all children".

The Christian ethos of the school, intertwined with their UNICEF's 'Rights Respecting School' status, supporting the rights and well-being of all children across the globe is a strong foundation for pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC). A recent visit from the Bishop of Cameroon, arranged by the Chichester diocese, has enabled pupils to link with a school in Cameroon to develop a greater understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith in a diverse society. Religious education (RE), taught imaginatively and creatively by class teachers, makes a strong contribution to SMSC and the school's Christian ethos. Pupils actively engage and enjoy RE, applying enquiry-based learning and the creative art, including role play and pottery, to explore, reflect and understand biblical teaching, Christian beliefs and world faiths. Pupils participate with confidence and success in a wide range of SMSC activities, including Year 2 pupils' participation in an annual 'Children's Concert' and Year 5 and 6 in the 'United Voices' concert at the Chichester Festival Theatre. The school were proud finalists in the diocesan 'Year of the Bible' 2017 art competition. Their stunning artwork included beautiful crafted cross, an example of which clearly reflected a pupil's inspiring interpretation of the Bible story of the sower and the seed (Matthew 13). Pupils are committed to identifying and supporting a range of local, national and global humanitarian charities. For example, Harvest Festival gifts for the Chichester foodbank, the MacMillan Cancer Care coffee morning and Red Nose Day. They participate every year in UNICEF's annual 'Day for Change', engaging in a range of related fundraising activities to raise money to protect and promote children's rights.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship underpins the school's outstanding Christian ethos. It is an affirmation and celebration of the school's explicit Christian values and Anglican tradition and beliefs. Led by the headteacher, staff, clergy and pupils, daily collective worship is celebrated as a central part of school life. Inspirational, engaging and inclusive worship offers all pupils and staff an outstanding rich spiritual experience of the Christian faith. Through structured and well-resourced themes, incorporating Anglican liturgy, experience of the Trinity, church festivals, biblical teaching, Christian values, music, drama, reflection and prayer, pupils have a good knowledge of their faith foundation. Worship strongly contributes to pupils' understanding of how applying gospel values impacts on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are enthusiastic in their responses to collective worship, "we really enjoy worship... hearing biblical stories... learning from our rector and other Christian visitors... and knowing God listens to us". Creative ways in leading acts of worship engages all pupils in stimulating experiences enabling them to explore and respond to biblical teaching, symbolism and applying Christian values to their daily life. Observing whole school worship led by the headteacher, incorporating multi-media images of society today and Jesus' teaching, pupils were fully engaged in exploring what it means 'to serve' (Matthew 20 v 28). Through role play the headteacher and a child re-enacted Jesus' love, respect and service to His friends when washing His disciples' feet at The Last Supper (John 13). Pupils responded sensitively as they were encouraged to consider and understand how they performed acts of Christian service to others. Relating explicit Christian values of respect, friendship, compassion and humility when working together, pupils were challenged to take personal responsibility for their own conduct and carry out three acts of kindness during the day.

Weekly school worship led by the rector of the Blessed Virgin Mary parish church, and regular church attendance to celebrate major festivals and the school Year 6 leavers service, bring the school and village community together. Worship themes, linked to Christian values, are planned collaboratively with the rector, in partnership with the headteacher of the other local church school in his parish. The Lord's Prayer, the school prayer, 'grace' at lunchtime and prayers at the end of the day are established practices and an integral part of children's spiritual experiences in school. Plans are in place, in line with the Church of England's 'Year of Prayer', with the intention of extending pupils' personal use of prayer and contribution to prayers in school worship. Interactive classroom reflection areas, class and pupil led worship make an outstanding contribution to pupils' understanding of biblical teaching and application of Christian values. Collective worship is led by several people with a variety of styles and different Christian backgrounds. Current monitoring of collective worship is not sufficiently structured and as such does not clearly identify how worship influences the daily life of the community.

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

The headteacher's dedication and success in embedding the school's Christian ethos within the whole school community is outstanding. Blending Christian values with the UNICEF 'Rights Respecting School' principles is a key issue within the school improvement plan which emphasises the status of the school as an active Christian community. The headteacher has established a collaborative culture that inspires and motivates the teaching team to ensure the school's Christian character impacts decisively on the development of every child. His pastoral leadership, mirrored by the staff team, significantly impacts on the school's core Christian values which guide school policy and daily practice. Personal care and well-being for all pupils is strong. Inclusive provision, through the skills of all staff, nurture provision and external support practitioners enable all pupils with specific educational needs to achieve well. Current pupil progress and attainment data indicates all pupils will achieve their personal potential and many will exceed age related expectations. Together, staff unreservedly celebrate how the Christian ethos permeates the daily life of the school; "through our team spirit...we lead by example... modelling Christian values... serving happy, loving and successful children".

Through their behaviours and actions, the chair of governors as a foundation governor and the rector as an ex-officio governor, communicate a strong Christian faith foundation to the whole school community. They are regular visitors to the school and well-known to staff and pupils. Both have been pro-active in extending their knowledge of church school leadership. The governors have a strong presence in the school, and lead with integrity, expertise and a breadth of skills. However, there has been limited professional development for the whole governing body in identifying and securing church school distinctiveness. Current records to monitor and evaluate the school's Christian distinctiveness lack the rigour to provide tangible evidence of impact. The recruitment of an additional foundation governor is a priority for the governing body.

Partnerships with the diocese of Chichester and the local area church and community schools to address school improvement are a strength of the school. For example, to further develop pupils' experience in planning and leading worship, the school successfully hosted a workshop for groups of peers from local schools on 'Leading Collective Worship', facilitated by 'Barnabas in Schools' organisation. The strong links with the Blessed Virgin Mary parish church strengthens and celebrates the school's Anglican faith foundation. Pupils frequently contribute to Sunday worship, with Christian values worship and creative RE curriculum experiences regularly displayed in the church. Re-enacting the events of Easter week at significant points in the village was an outstanding spiritual experience for pupils, parents and the community. The parochial church council present the Year 6 pupils with a Bible when they leave Singleton Church of England school. Twice a year pupils sing at village lunches which are arranged by the Valley parish and held in the village hall to mark Lent and Christmas. Year 6 pupils attend the annual diocesan leavers services at Chichester Cathedral. The school website, prospectus and parental newsletters purposefully endorse the school's strong Christian ethos. A recent parental questionnaire unanimously agreed 'the school has a clear Christian distinctiveness'. Parents are overwhelming in praising their choice of Singleton church school; "the headteacher and staff are warm and caring to our children and to us as families... our children are taught to look after each other... Christian songs and prayers are shared at home". The parents' association play a valued and active role in school and community events, including funding book bags, physical education bags and swimming coaches. With the wider community the parents' association support and organise charity fundraising, the Christmas fair and the annual Year 6 leavers' picnic. There is a strong partnership between the school and the independent nursery on the school site. The school meets the statutory requirements for religious education and collective worship.

SIAMS report January 2018 Singleton Church of England Primary School PO18 OHP