



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

<b>Alderbury and West Grimstead Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School</b>	Firs Road Alderbury Salisbury SP5 3BD
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Salisbury</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Good
Local authority	Wiltshire
Date/s of inspection	29 September 2016
Date of last inspection	6 September 2011
School's unique reference number	126445
Headteacher	Paul Douglas-Beveridge
Inspector's name and number	David Hatrey 844

### School context

Alderbury and West Grimstead Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary is a smaller than average rural school serving these two village communities. The number of children who receive pupil premium funding and the number who have English as an additional language are significantly below national averages. Whilst the number of children who have special educational needs is in line, the number of children with statements or similar is above national averages. The school is part of the Downton cluster with other church schools.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Alderbury and West Grimstead Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- Children's behaviour is good as are their relationships with all members of the community which is generally linked to the Christian character of the school.
- The quality of leadership in religious education (RE) is one of the strengths of the school, raising the impact of teaching and introducing new approaches to the subject which stimulate and challenge children.
- Leaders articulate a clear Christian vision for the school based upon serving the community through its Christian values. This is increasingly making an impact upon children at the school.

### Areas to improve

- Enable children to recognise and articulate the distinctively Christian characteristics of the school's values and the significant impact they have on daily lives and achievement.
- Ensure that the Christian ethos makes a greater contribution to raising standards in all core subjects so that they are in line with national expectations; and which children understand as reflecting the school's Christian distinctiveness and its importance to them in their learning.
- Establish an effective system for monitoring and evaluation of the Christian distinctiveness, which involves all members of the school community, leading to regular improvements.

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

Three distinct Christian values are placed at the heart of the life and work of the school. These are; friendship, thankfulness and service. Children have a good understanding of them and explain what they look like in everyday life. Many children recount life stories which illuminate the meaning of values. Most children recognise values come from the teaching of Jesus and God, learning more about them from the Bible. Values are making an increasing impact on children's lives due to the high importance given to them in school. Stickers are awarded when children show values in action, their photographs featuring on displays. Every two weeks, in 'values' worship, book marks are presented to children who demonstrate the value. Parents of these children attend so that it is seen as a prestigious award and, because it is made clear why the award is given, all learn from this. Where minor behaviour disputes arise children are asked to reflect on values and take actions as a result of this. This supports the children's understanding of the importance of values and their contribution to school life. The quality of behaviour across the school is rising steadily, where there are issues the school responds swiftly and effectively. Parents praise the school for the high standard of behaviour that is expected. Relationships across the school are at least good. Children collaborate well and show concern for one another. The quality of provision for spirituality is developing well as is the impact it is making. There are more opportunities to reflect and children use these to think about their learning and daily life. Religious education provides some excellent stimuli for reflection where the responses show real depth of thought. More children have a growing understanding of the contribution this makes to their emerging opinions and beliefs. Times for reflection are not currently identified in planning so some opportunities across curriculum areas are lost. Monitoring of the impact of spirituality, and its evaluation, is not fully developed. There is a growing awareness of major faiths and how these are reflected in worship and action. Children make thoughtful comparisons between these and Christianity which deepens their own understanding of their beliefs. Work supporting the 'Child of Hope' project is a good example of the children's concern for others, raising substantial funds which have made a real difference to many people.

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

Worship has a prominent role in the life of the school. Children are engaged in worship through good opportunities for interaction. The use of music and singing is a strong feature. Teaching is linked to the Bible and presented in a variety of ways. Verses from the Bible are explored and related to the everyday experience of the children. Where these are followed up in class, their significance is enhanced through discussion that develops the children's understanding of values. Planning for collective worship is drawn from the 'Values for Life' programme with 18 Christian values explored over a three year cycle. Children experience a number of leaders in worship and variety of approaches. Children draw upon these ideas as they have some opportunities to plan and lead worship. This could be extended further by providing occasions for children to be more involved so that they have a greater ownership of worship. The main Christian festivals are celebrated, either in church or in school. Children have a good understanding of these and are aware of their importance to Christians. Two children from each class form the worship council. They contribute ideas and take leading roles when celebrating major Christian festivals. Prayer is generally well taught. Younger children write short thank you prayers which develop in maturity as they move through the school. The introduction of other types of prayers is supported by good use of prayer reflection spaces in each class. Children know that prayer is a time they can share with God. Most children have a good level of knowledge of Jesus, and could talk about His life and teachings, with fewer expressing an appreciation of the concept of the Trinity. Each week a class evaluates an act of worship, against three criteria; learning, reflecting and responding. This alongside monitoring by the governors is forwarded to the ethos committee. This has led to some changes. The grade is not higher because, whilst children agreed they enjoy worship, they could not confidently recall acts of worship which influence their thinking.

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

The quality of the leadership in RE is one of the strengths of the school, having a significant impact on teaching and learning across the school. Teaching and learning in RE is now consistently good and has risen well during the last year with more teaching being outstanding. This has been achieved by effective lesson observations to implement new ideas and refine practice. New approaches to RE successfully engage learners, dealing with big questions of life and religious concepts. Learning starts with children's own understanding which is then challenged by encouraging them to think through what they believe and gives reasons for their views. Children draw upon higher thinking skills, reviewing and wrestling with ideas as they develop their beliefs. They draw on previous knowledge, acquiring the language to support how to express what they feel. Questions such as, "Can I nourish my soul?", or "What does salvation mean for Christians?" are considered. The depth of some of their answers is particularly good. Ideas are also expressed in art, music and drama. For example, children paint pictures showing what prayers might look like when given to God. Songs are composed and performed, images created to represent forgiveness and the Trinity. Opportunities to share these with the school enrich its Christian ethos. Children confidently state that they enjoy RE and increasingly see the relevance of this to their lives. Strengths in teaching include good pace in lessons with tasks well matched to the needs of each individual. Staff are also using thoughtful reflective lessons to develop skills of empathy. Quality teaching and learning is apparent in the upper part of the school. Good practice is being shared, but needs to be fully embedded. New ideas for learning are introduced and trialled through RE before applied to other subjects. The grade is not higher because attainment in RE in previous years has not been good, in some instances significantly below national expectations. This is being addressed and progress in some year groups has improved with more children achieving higher standards. Support and challenge from the ethos committee has played a distinct part in this. Governors are aware of strengths and areas for development and ensure these are given a high priority.

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

The headteacher and newly established leadership team are passionate about developing a vibrant church school. The head's vision, together with the church, places the school at the centre of community life showing Jesus' love through service. The mission meets the needs of children and families alike, living out Christian values. His enthusiasm and commitment have given clear direction to the school's work. This is making a difference with attitudes towards learning rising. There has been a re-emphasis on Christian values and improvements to the quality of teaching and learning. The school's Christian distinctiveness is reflected in the enhanced provision senior members of staff have created for disadvantaged children. Progress achieved by this group is rising steadily. It is also evident in the care and additional nurture the school provides for individual children in times of crisis. Governors are conscientious and enthusiastic about their role. They are knowledgeable of the school's performance and involved in monitoring. This has not yet fully included evaluating the Christian distinctiveness and its impact on children's lives. Therefore, whilst the ethos committee has developed its role, this has not been informed by recent monitoring and therefore not as effective as it could be. Rich relationships are firmly established with the church which is mutually beneficial. Worship is led by the vicar and an 'Open the Book' team. Governors are influential in shaping the school's work and holding the school to account. Festival theme days enrich children's understanding, for example in prayer and Pentecost celebrations. The school draws on Diocesan resources particularly developing the quality of RE. The grade is not higher as the school's Christian ethos is not yet making a sufficient impact on standards. In recent years attainment has been below national expectations. This is being addressed and the progress children are making in literacy is rising. This is an ambitious school and, though all its initiatives are not yet fully embedded, it is making very good progress in many areas. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

