

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bolney Church of England Primary School

Church Lane, Bolney, Haywards Heath RH17 5QP

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Chichester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	West Sussex
Date of inspection	31 January 2017
Date of last inspection	13 July 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	VC primary 126007
Headteacher	Lorraine Kenny
Inspector's name and number	Hilary Ferries 276

School context

Bolney is a small village primary school serving the local community. The numbers of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium, with special educational needs and with English as an additional language are below the national average. The headteacher has been in post one year. The school was judged to be good by Ofsted in 2016.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bolney as a Church of England school are good.

- The Christian values are embedded into the life of the school and underpin policy and practice.
- Leaders at all levels are committed to the development of the school as a church school. They know their school well and are taking action to develop the Christian distinctiveness further.
- The importance of prayer is celebrated through prayer spaces, collective worship and reflection areas throughout the school
- Opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contribute well to the learning and development of the pupils' understanding of the world.
- Pupil voice is growing and developing, through systems such as Church Council.

Areas to improve

- Introduce a system for monitoring and evaluating collective worship to build on the recent changes to collective worship.
- Formalise the monitoring and evaluation systems carried out by the spirituality group to build on and develop the school as a church school.

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

The vision for Bolney school, *'Be the Best You Can, Guided by God'*, is displayed around the school and underpins both policy and action. The four Christian values of respect, resilience, love and honesty were identified by the whole school community as the core values in a recent review and are known and articulated by all. Pupils talk confidently about the values and the reason they are important to them. They are displayed in the stunning values tree in the hall, are the basis of the collective worship themes and pupils are rewarded with oak leaf certificates for living the values in school. This contributes to what one pupil described as 'the very special atmosphere'. The Christian ethos also contributes positively to the achievement and wellbeing of pupils. Behaviour is outstanding; the policy is based on the four Christian values and relationships between all members of the school community are very strong. There is a real sense of a school family and pupils and parents talk about the importance of this to them. Systems to support this are built into school life, such as Reception class having buddies from Year 6 who support them through their induction and pupils who have moved on to secondary school are keen to return to support events. Pupils describe the school as inclusive and welcoming to all, whether they are Christian, from other faiths or of none and talk about the importance of valuing and being valued.

Opportunities for spiritual moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Every classroom has a reflection area that is used regularly for prayer, reflecting on 'big questions' and there are also prayer spaces and corners throughout the building that pupils use regularly to talk, think and pray. There are regular opportunities for fundraising. Pupils nominate the charities and talk confidently about the importance of supporting others and the reason why. The school is linked closely with Hope House School in Haiti. Staff visit regularly and children fundraise for the school. The heart at the bottom of the values tree is also a symbol at Hope House and connects the two schools. Use of face time and other communication gives pupils a real idea of life in Haiti and contributes well to their understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith.

Religious education (RE) contributes well to the Christian character of the school. Pupils enjoy the wide range of themes, the creative way it is taught and learning about Christianity and other world faiths. The RE subject leads have been exploring a fresh approach to RE based on discussion and activity, pupils are responding positively to this and they speak confidently. One pupil said 'RE is my favourite subject because we make things and we learn about God'. The school is exploring 'Understanding Christianity' and looking forward to introducing this approach, focused on developing a deeper religious, theological and cultural literacy. In addition to regular RE lessons, aspects of spiritual development are linked to the topics, such as fair trade as part of a unit of the Rain Forest. This is explicit in planning and contributes well to pupil learning.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is well planned and organised. The spirituality group, made up of the headteacher, the RE leads, clergy, chair of governors and contributions from pupils, is always seeking creative and innovative ways to worship. An example of this is the passion play for Easter 2016 that involved all the pupils in the school. Each class was given a Bible passage and acted it out in the school grounds. The evaluations from parents and carers show how moving they found this. Each of the Christian values is being explored as worship themes which further embeds them. Worship is led by the headteacher, staff, parish priest and other local ministers who all follow the theme. Pupils say they value the wide range of worship opportunities and the different leaders and in a recent survey, 55/75 pupils said that 'collective worship is a very important aspect of school life'. The displays in the hall link the values to their biblical base and each week the headteacher gives a 'take away task' based on the theme. This reinforces the message for pupils and staff and is used during the week in class. It also enables teachers, who do not attend worship every day, to know about the theme and what is happening in worship. Each week a group of pupils from across the key stage two classes plans and delivers worship based on this reflection and bible passage. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to plan and deliver worship and one pupil talked of the increase in confidence he had felt since doing this. The recent changes to worship have not yet been evaluated, but the school leadership has plans in place for this.

Prayer is embedded in the life of the school. Very effective use is made of the prayer spaces. These are changed on a regular basis. Pupils use these for reflection and speak of the difference that prayer makes to their lives. One pupil said, 'The harvest prayer space has helped me to think about how I can pray and it showed me how I can look to God' and another, 'It helped me believe that God still loves me when I do something bad'. There is a weekly prayer

/ worship group called 'Hotline to Heaven' attended by approximately 20 children who meet and take part in practical and reflective prayer activities.

Pupils have been introduced to the idea of the Trinity and it is being explored in different ways. Pupils interviewed could talk about this and were interested and engaged. The school attends worship at the church several times during the year for major Christian festivals and pupils talked confidently about the different celebrations and their meanings.

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

Bolney's clear Christian vision is articulated by all and contributes to the school's positive ethos and achievements. The headteacher, who has been in a post for a year, is open to ways of exploring and developing the Christian ethos further. She is well supported and challenged by the governors, who have a strategic vision for the school as a church school. The chair is a regular visitor and knows the school well and acts as an 'enquiring friend' to the headteacher. The spirituality group, made up of governors and staff and the parish priest, work well together to drive the school as a church school. The church council, made up of four pupils, also feeds into this group with the views and thoughts of pupils. They identify and lead the development of areas such as worship and the prayer spaces which have impacted on the school through the opportunities for quiet prayer and reflection. The spirituality group has worked on the self-evaluation of the school as church school and are aware that there is an opportunity to formalise the way they work to make this more systematic. There have been several new innovations, such as the pupils leading collective worship, but not enough time has passed to fully evaluate them. They have recently prepared a questionnaire to gather parent views which is about to be distributed. Last term they surveyed pupils and used this feedback for the strategic plan. The development of the school as a church school is woven through the school improvement plan which reinforces the importance to the school community of the school as a church school.

There are positive relationships with the parish church. The parish priest leads worship each week and is a regular visitor, also offering pastoral support. He is known to the children and families, who value his input too. The school community writes for the parish magazine and members of the congregation are involved with the school in a range of ways. There is a strong sense that church and school see themselves as part of the same family. This is supported by village events which include church and school and there is a clear sense of community. Parents are very positive about the school. One parent said that whilst not a Christian herself she had chosen the school because of the strong values and the experiences and another parent had moved her children to Bolney because of the strong Christian values and the messages given to the children.

Before the headteacher started in post a member of staff was acting head and there are clear opportunities for preparing for leadership of the school as a church school. The RE leaders have benefitted from training and support from the diocese, as has the new headteacher, and there are very positive links with the North East Area Rural Schools (NEARS) family of schools, which enables subject leaders, such as RE leads to work together and offers opportunities for pupil events that helps them make friends with pupils from other schools who will be at the same secondary school.

Arrangements for religious education and collective worship meet statutory requirements.

SIAMS report January 2017, Bolney Church of England Primary School RH17 5QP