

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

The March CE Primary School

Claypit Lane Westhampnett Chichester West Sussex PO18 0NU	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Chichester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	West Sussex
Date of inspection	15 November 2016
Date of last inspection	18-19 October 2010
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 126031
Headteacher	Nicky Metcalfe
Inspector's name and number	Rosemary Appleby 749

School context

The March CE Primary School is smaller than the average size primary school with 207 pupils on roll. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals are below the national average as is the number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Attendance is above national average. Most pupils come from a white British heritage. The headteacher took up post in January 2016. This popular and oversubscribed school serves two parishes. St Peter's church is within walking distance whereas St Andrew's church requires the school community to travel by coach. Therefore the school mainly attends St Peter's Church for services.

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

- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher, effectively supported by governors, ensures that the Christian ethos is continually evolving for the benefit of all learners.
- The close links with parents, the local church and the wider community contribute to the promotion of the school's Christian values.
- Collective worship is effectively planned and delivered by a variety of leaders offering learners a rich spiritual experience

Areas to improve

- Improve the process of self-evaluation of the school as a church school so that regular formal reviews in which all aspects of the school's church school distinctiveness are considered so that leaders, including the ethos group, provide greater challenge to the school.
- Develop robust differentiation in religious education (RE) so that appropriate challenge is provided for all pupils.
- Develop pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith so that they develop a greater appreciation of the global nature of Christianity.

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

The March CE school provides a high level of nurture and care to its school community through a strong Christian ethos of love and respect. This is evident in the inclusive and positive caring relationships across the school community and the good behaviour seen around the school. Stakeholders have a shared understanding and ownership of the school's Christian values of trust, compassion, love, community, growth, learning, peace, belief and forgiveness which underpin the daily life of the school. These are displayed in many areas around the school and are explicitly explained to parents prior to their children joining the school. The explicit promotion of Christian values is reinforced through a display of leaflets on the roots and meaning of Christian values and statements on the school website such as 'we are proud to be a Christian school community'. Learners are aware of all the Christian values and most secure when talking about the values of love and respect. They talk with confidence about how supporting their partner school in Kenya is connected to the value of love and helps to give the learners there 'a better life'. Learners are less secure when making connecting between the Christian values and how they impact on their own lives. The school effectively provides an inclusive environment where the needs of all pupils are met. Parents value the family ethos where Christian values contribute to 'their children's 'whole self' and say that at home their 'children use the language of the values and articulate to parents what it means'. The Christian ethos contributes to pupil achievement which current data indicates is above national average for foundation stage, above for key stage one learners although below for key stage 2 learners. Displays around the school of remembrance linked to John 15:13, holding crosses, prayers linked to Jeremiah 3:3, Christian Aid, links with schools in Tooting, Kenya and Sierra Leone make a good contribution to social moral, spiritual and cultural education (SMSC) through reinforcing Christian symbolism. Some members of the school community are not yet confident in articulating the school's definition of spirituality. However, reflection areas in each classroom and the peace garden in the outside environment appropriately extend opportunities for quiet reflection.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is a special and distinct time in the school day when Christian values, linked to biblical references, are effectively reinforced. This ensures that the vision and values of the school remain central to the life of the school community. Pupils are actively engaged and respectful through participation in all elements of worship such as singing, reflection time, and praying. House captains are beginning to lead worship. However this is not yet regularly established and does not involve a variety of pupils from across the school. Pupils evaluate worship and the recent scaffolding of questions is helping them to be more evaluative. The person of Jesus Christ is evident in collective worship and pupils have opportunities to develop their understanding of the Trinity and can name God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit as being important. Aspects of Anglican worship such as the structure of gather, engage, respond and send and the Eucharist are well established. The stunning wooden altar is the focal point of worship. It was designed by pupils in the shape of an open Bible and donated through a partnership with Rolls Royce. Worship is enriched through contributions from the Baptist church, Free church and Swanfield chapel and increases learners understanding of a range of Christian traditions. Prayer has a high profile in the school. Pupils write their own thoughtful prayers for inclusion in prayer pots in the hall and these are selected and read by pupils in worship. Pupils know that prayer is 'talking to Jesus and God' and 'a time to reflect on ourselves'. A prayer afternoon effectively increased the school communities understanding of prayer and has been reinforced in some class reflection areas. Parents told me that their children often come home and teach them prayers. Governors begin their meetings with prayer. Pupils are aware of biblical material and are beginning to relate this to their own lives. One pupil interviewed said that feeding the five thousand was about sharing and linked it to the Christian values of love and respect. The Passion Play, Christingle and year group services at St Peter's church, plus the service of light at St Andrew's church, effectively reinforces Anglican tradition and is well attended by parents. Clergy from St Peters led worship and give valued pastoral support. St Andrew's church has been without a substantive leader for four years and this reduces the links between this church and the school. Collective worship is well planned. However the school has correctly identified that formally monitoring worship and interviewing pupils to gather their responses to worship is an area for development.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

RE is given a high profile and an enquiry based approach to the teaching of RE enables learners to effectively reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual understanding. In addition the use of the 'Big Question' approach such as 'who is God?' has increased pupils' curiosity and this is evidenced through the parent's forum which says that pupils continue these discussions at home. The RE leader is passionate about ensuring that staff and learners develop sound RE knowledge and understanding. She leads staff meetings, moderation of RE work and observes RE practice across the school and this enables her to take action, where needed, to improve RE provision. Attending the Diocesan training 'Understanding Christianity' and how to be an effective RE subject leader

enables her to ensure that staff have the appropriate skills and knowledge to improve RE. Pupils learn about Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism and through this work pupils develop compassion, empathy and respect for other cultures although their understanding of the global nature of Christianity is not yet fully developed. Pupils have been taught to respect their RE work and each pupil has designed a beautiful cross to decorate the cover of their RE exercise books. Lessons are well planned, detailed and often creative although differentiation is not consistently evidenced in recorded work. Pupils learn about angels as messengers of God and the symbolism of the Annunciation through art. This is often linked to biblical references effectively such as Year 6 work where values and the Bible are linked to 'Rights respecting schools' and enable exploration of diversity and faith. Pupils are taught to respond to the learning objective in their own personal creative way. For example, pupils learn about creation in the Bible and then express their ideas through music and art. They effectively link God creating the world to their personal lives as creators. Staff assess each piece of work through a comment to the pupil on how they have achieved the learning objective and a question to the pupil to further understanding. Staff challenge pupils through individual questions which provides some differentiation. Pupil's personal responses are reflective and illustrate that learners are developing enquiry, analysis and reflection skills. A new tracking system for RE was introduced in October 2016. Pupils' learning in RE is assessed against national expectations and use RE exemplars to ensure consistency of approach. Assessments identify pupils who have met, are on track or below national RE expectations. This has not yet had time to embed and does not yet track pupils who have exceeded national expectations. The school has correctly identified that increasing the percentage of pupils at or above the national expectations is a key area for improvement as too many pupils in KS2 are currently not at the expected level of attainment. The introduction of a new syllabus and assessment system has not had time to make a full impact on attainment and progress has not yet been measured at this early time of the academic year. The school has made an effective start to assessing RE but attainment has not yet been compared with other core subjects or reported to governors.

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

The headteacher has inspired school leaders and this has made an impact on the development of the Christian ethos. For example, worship planning is more thorough and assessment in RE is more effective. Because of this leaders have a better understanding of the Christian ethos and clearly articulate a strong understanding of how their Christian vision gives direction for the whole school community. The school is working towards the RE quality mark which emphasizes their commitment to quality RE. Key issues for development from the previous inspection have been fully addressed. Parents speak warmly of the school and are proud that respect and love for all are embedded Christian values and that their children have time to discover their own beliefs. Governors' 2016 questionnaire to parents show that over 90%, of parents who responded, agree that the school provides opportunities for their children to discuss Christian values in worship and that their children are happy and safe. Newsletters ensure that the school community is aware of which Christian value is being explored and certificates are given to pupils who demonstrate the focus Christian value. The current school plan for improvement of RE, collective worship and Christian character includes appropriate action points linked to Christian distinctiveness and how they will be monitored. Governors are committed to the Christian ethos of the school and support the school effectively. They make visits to monitor and evaluate and attend school events throughout the year enabling them to know their school well. The newly formed ethos working party has started to formalise evaluation of the school's Christian distinctiveness and acknowledges that they must now start to ask more challenging questions about the Christian foundation of the school. During staff interviews candidates are questioned about their commitment to the school's Christian distinctiveness to ensure that the school appoints staff committed to promoting a Christian ethos. Good use is made of Diocese training for staff and governors to support them in ensuring that the school continually evolves its Christian distinctiveness. Links with the local churches, churches further afield, Rolls Royce, Goodwood estate and local church schools are well established and enhance the provision of the school. Arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements.

SIAMS report November 2016 The March CE VA Primary School Westhampnett PO18 0NU