

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Saltwood Church of England Primary School

Grange Road, Saltwood, Hythe Kent CT21 4QS

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Diocese

Canterbury

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Local authority

Kent

Federation

Federated with Bodsham primary school

Date of inspection

16 June 2017

Date of last inspection

18 July 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

Voluntary Aided primary | 18744

Executive Headteacher

Elizabeth Pettersen

Inspector's name and number

Anne Southgate 820

School context

Saltwood is a smaller than average sized primary school. It serves the local community and it is federated with another church primary school. Both schools are currently judged as outstanding by Ofsted. The headteacher is executive headteacher of both schools. The pupils come predominantly from White British backgrounds. The proportions of pupils with special needs and disabilities, and of those who are eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average. The vicar has been in post since November 2016, following a year without a vicar.

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

- The outstanding commitment and passion of the headteacher has ensured that the life of the school community is based securely on Christian values.
- Spiritual development is exceptional because pupils are encouraged to reflect deeply, to experience wonder, and to care about the world around them.
- Highly creative teaching in religious education (RE) helps pupils to develop as thoughtful, inquisitive individuals with open minds.

Areas to improve

- Make the Christian basis to the schools' policies explicit, so that those outside the school fully understand the Christian reasons for these.
- Ensure that everyone uses the term 'worship' for collective worship, so that those new to the school fully understand the Christian character of school assemblies.

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

Pupils achieve standards which are well above national averages. This is a direct result of adults in the school affirming God's love for each individual, so that they feel safe to take risks in their learning. All stakeholders understand that clear and explicitly Christian values of love, strength and creativity underpin the daily life of the school community. Pupils apply these values quite naturally to their learning. They explain eloquently that they show strength by being resilient and persevering with their work. They are encouraged to learn in a variety of creative ways and to record their learning in many different formats. Pupils and staff show love through the considerable support they offer each other and the genuine care for the success and wellbeing of each individual. Pupils are very well supported emotionally and this helps to secure above average attendance and enables all pupils achieve their best. Behaviour is exceptionally good as pupils show respect and care for all members of their community. The school's values are clearly rooted in Christian teaching. Pupils are able to explain this with ease. For example, that the value of strength relates to the story of Job and to that of Jesus facing crucifixion. Pupil's spiritual development is excellent. Displays around the school, together with well-planned learning experiences, prompt pupils to ask questions, to wonder and to care about others. There are many opportunities to offer prayers during the day, including an outside spiritual garden, and many pupils choose to do so. The secure Christian basis to the work of the school, and the broad and creative curriculum, ensures that pupils develop very well spiritually, morally, socially and culturally.

Although there is little diversity of background amongst the school community, pupils show a real interest in learning about those who are different from themselves. They value learning about other world faiths in RE and are fascinated by the connections with Christian belief. Pupils really enjoy considering the questions that are posed in RE lessons and this makes a significant contribution to their strong spiritual development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Pupils very much enjoy gathering together for worship each day. They describe their experience as 'fun' and as 'making us think'. A group of year 6 worship leaders regularly lead worship, using Anglican sentences and responses. Pupils are actively engaged in worship. They act stories, help to demonstrate the points made, and discuss questions posed with their talk partners and with the adults in the school. Worship themes are picked up throughout the day and they are often linked to learning and to behaviour. The themes are displayed around the school, with interactive displays that challenge pupils to think deeply. Consequently, many pupils use the quiet areas in the school to offer prayers. Pupils often discuss worship themes at home, such as 'which is the most important Christian value?' Planning is meticulous and it ensures that pupils experience a wide variety of Christian festivals as well as learning about Christian beliefs. As a result pupils have an excellent knowledge of biblical stories and a mature understanding of beliefs, such as that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The depth of reflection engendered by worship results in pupils showing genuine concern for others. This is exemplified by the wide range of charities supported by the school community, such as Cancer Research and the local food bank. The school council reflects on the messages from worship and puts these into action, an example being the school 'kindness challenge'.

The school was supported very well by other Christian denominations, such as the Salvation Army, before the arrival of the new vicar. These partnerships continue, and they ensure that pupils experience a wide range of styles of worship. The vicar now leads collective worship every week and pupils visit the church fortnightly. This means that pupils are very familiar with local Anglican traditions. The vicar helps to monitor collective worship, as do pupils and staff. Pupil worship leaders regularly collect pupil views and record these. This careful monitoring means that acts of worship continue to engage and to inspire pupils. The school community are very clear that their 'assemblies' are Christian acts of worship. However, because many pupils and staff members use the term 'assembly', it is not always clear to visitors that this means Christian worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Standards in RE are high and are often above those achieved in other core subjects. This is supported by very creative teaching, which ensures that all pupils are engaged and motivated. Pupils are enabled to ask searching questions and to think very deeply. As a result, they learn exceptionally well. Pupils describe RE as 'exciting' and as 'the most interesting subject because there is no right answer'. They very much enjoy learning about the beliefs of

others and they are often intrigued by the connections between religions. Highly effective teaching offers pupils a range of ways to respond and to record their learning. This ensures that pupils of all abilities are able to record their thoughts effectively. Pupils are challenged by the questions which underpin their RE lessons. They are very able to reflect on these and to relate their thinking to their own lives. For example in Year 2, pupils developed their understanding of the Trinity by thinking about the different ways they might behave in different situations and roles.

RE has a very high profile within the school. It is included in the school improvement plan and is treated as a core subject. Teachers are supported well by the two RE leaders to deliver quality RE lessons. As a result all teaching is enthusiastic and creative. Assessment is thorough and accurate. Exceptionally rigorous monitoring of teaching and of assessment outcomes informs effective interventions, so that no pupil falls behind. The RE leaders work very well together, and with the headteacher, they have established RE as an exciting and central part of the school's curriculum.

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

The headteacher has a very clear Christian vision of a school where each child is valued as a unique child of God and developed as a whole person. This vision is shared with all stakeholders and it drives school improvement and well-being. The focus on being an outstanding church school is a clear priority and, as a result, pupils flourish spiritually as well as academically. This means that Saltwood is a very happy school in which pupils can experience life in all its fullness. Members of staff are developed effectively as future leaders of church schools. Regular training in RE is delivered for all teachers, and leaders access relevant diocesan and national courses, such as the Church of England Professional Qualification for Headship. This means that the headteacher has prepared the school very well to continue being a highly effective church school after her retirement at the end of this term. Systems for self-evaluation are thorough and well-established. A monitoring pair of governors ensure that all governors are kept informed of the school's progress as a church school. The views of all stakeholders are collected regularly and often, so that everyone's voice is heard. Rigorous monitoring, together with effective support, care and training, ensures the school's continued success. Statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are fully met and these areas are an important priority in the school. Whilst daily life at the school is securely rooted in Christian values and beliefs, this is not evident in all of the school's policies.

The school is at the heart of its local community and works very well in partnership with the church and with other Christian denominations. The partnership with the church increasingly benefits both parties. The church has helped to fund a school choir, and pupils leading aspects of church worship has led to increased attendance at family services. Saltwood works effectively with the school with which it is federated to support outstanding practice in both schools. As a result of the very clear vision and drive of senior leaders, Saltwood provides pupils with an experience which is deeply Christian and life affirming.

SIAMS report June 2017 Saltwood Church of England Primary School, Saltwood CT21 4QS