

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Trottscliffe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	
Church Lane, Trottscliffe, Kent, ME19 5EB	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Rochester
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Good
Date of inspection	15 March 2018
Date of last inspection	February 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary – Voluntary Controlled – 118630
Headteacher	Lucy Henderson
Inspector's name and number	Niki Paterson 883

School context

This small primary school serves the immediate community of the village of Trottscliffe in the north of Kent. The school was judged as good by Ofsted in March 2017. The number of pupils who are disadvantaged and eligible for pupil premium funding is slightly below the national average. The number of pupils in need of support for special educational needs/disabilities is in line with national average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.

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

- Passionate, focussed and determined leadership by the headteacher has developed a distinctive vision for the school through which every child receives an enriching and life-changing education.
- Excellent relationships with the local church are symbolic of a true partnership in developing the worshipful and spiritual life of the school.
- Collective worship is highly valued by the pupils and they are being well developed as worship leaders.
- Leaders have created an ethos where care, trust and respect have resulted in warm and supportive relationships at all levels.

Areas to improve

- Enhance the distinctiveness of the school's vision and values and, consequently, its policies so that they are clearly rooted in biblical teaching.
- Ensure formal monitoring of the impact of the school's distinctiveness is undertaken by a range of governors so that the school can continue to develop as a church school.
- Provide professional development for leaders and governors so that the distinctiveness of the school remains a priority in succession planning.

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

The school community has recently developed Christian values of wisdom, trust, community and hope. These are lived out in both the school's teaching practices and in its physical environment. Although only established at the beginning of the school year, they are already having significant impact on the working life of the school. They drive the headteacher's vision to enable every child to receive a life-changing education and to flourish as part of a loving community. Parents talk highly of the school and how well leaders 'breathed new life' into the school. It is an open, caring and sought after provision where families are warmly welcomed and valued. This is an expression of how the school lives out its value of community particularly well. Pupil voice, through a group called the 'worship committee, is used well to monitor how Christian distinctiveness is impacting on daily practice. Membership of the committee is elected and highly prized by pupils and includes meeting regularly with the local rector. In addition to this, younger pupils engage with an optional lunchtime school club called 'leading lights' which explores the Christian faith on a more personal level.

Behaviour is excellent. Pupils and school leaders can articulate how the school's Christian values, embedded through daily practice, are underpinning supportive relationships and attitudes to learning. For example, pupils describe how the values are helping them to respect differing opinions so they 'could be better friends'. They also recognize that their value of community encourages an ethos of helping one another and learning together. As a result, attainment has been maintained at levels above the national average and all groups make strong progress. Attendance is also above the national expectation and exclusions are exceptionally rare. Pupils can make some reference to particular bible stories and how these exemplify the school's Christian values. However, these biblical links are not made clear to all stakeholders or made evident in school policies.

Pupils value the presence of the reflective spaces in their classrooms and an outdoor spiritual dome which can be freely accessed. Pupils and staff talk about how this area encourages them to be reflective. Religious education (RE) is well taught and challenges pupil thinking. These experiences contribute very well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. In turn, this is well supported by the school's Christian and inclusive ethos. Pupils have an understanding of their responsibility to love others in their community and beyond by organising their own fundraising to support local and national projects. For example, the pupils help to run the fair trade stall in the church and have recently engaged with the Christian charity 'Fields of Life' which focusses on Christian mission in Africa. This deepens the pupils' understanding of Christianity as a worldwide faith. Pupils rightly recognise that RE encourages them to appreciate difference and diversity and can talk openly about the importance of learning about and respecting a wide range of faiths. They also talk about the importance that RE has to play in developing new relationships with a wide range of people.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.

Distinctively Christian collective worship, which is focused on the teaching and inspiration of Jesus, is clearly valued by the community. Pupils are attentive, responsive and joyful in their praise. They understand the purpose of worship and are an integral part in its delivery. For example, in the collective worship observed on the importance of making a difference in your community, pupils of all ages led the whole school by sharing their personal prayers. Worship is well led by a wide range of other leaders, including staff, clergy and organisations such as the Family Trust. This ensures that pupils experience a variety of styles in worship and helps to maintain high levels of engagement. Pupils are well developed as leaders of worship, as recommended by the previous denominational inspection. They play a regular role in the liturgical practice of every time of worship. Pupils highly value their role on the worship committee. They work frequently with the local rector to plan and lead services and to develop their own special times of worship, such as a prayer activity day in church. Christian values are integral to the content of worship, which is rooted in biblical teaching. Daily planning is informed by diocesan planning and is frequently adapted to meet the needs of the community. Joint monitoring by pupils and the rector ensures that this evolves to meet the needs of the school community; this has included ensuring that parents are invited to be part of the worshipping community.

Through worship and RE, pupils have a good understanding of the Christian concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils are familiar with Anglican traditions, principally through the celebration and observance of festivals linked to the Christian calendar. Other key Anglican practices such as, for example, opening and closing sentences which have been made bespoke to the school are regularly used. Prayer is made meaningful, as both pupils and staff members write and deliver prayer which is relevant to the current needs of the community. Pupils' confidence in impromptu shared prayer is a clear indication of how worship makes pupils feel safe. Pupils are very familiar with the Lord's prayer and understand its importance for Christians.

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

The distinctive and focussed leadership of the headteacher is developing a whole school approach to enable every child to flourish. This is rooted in a shared Christian vision in which hope and aspiration for every child and their family is enabling children to realise their unique gifts and talents. Staff are fully supported by leaders, and as result, their work in community has enabled the relatively new vision to already impact on the needs of individual pupils. This has helped to breathe new life in to the school, so that it has grown in number whilst maintaining high academic progress for all groups. A strong relationship with the parish church is clearly evidenced through the integral role of the rector. She is highly involved in the governance and pastoral life of the school and is well known to the pupils and their families. Good communication with parents, through the development of an open door policy, means that they are highly supportive of the school's Christian foundation and its joint working with its church. Parents fully appreciate the welcoming and hospitable ethos which they say is modelled by the headteacher and echoed by staff.

School leaders have been proactive in highlighting the Christian values, so that they fully underpin the distinctive vision, for example by ensuring that the values are lived out through pedagogy and practice. However, the Christian teaching which underpins the vision and values is not fully documented or shared beyond the school. Leaders value and support school staff to achieve their potential. Consequently, staff retention and wellbeing levels are high , as individuals are appreciated and recognised for their time, skills and dedication. Although some support is accessed at diocesan level, staff professional development for leaders of church schools is in its infancy as is the professional development of governors. However, the RE leader keeps up to date with new initiatives in RE but is new to the role. Early impact shows a shared understanding of distinctiveness and has ensured that standards in RE are prioritised. Areas for development from the previous denominational inspection have very been well addressed. This includes the development of an outside spiritual dome, which is used by the whole community. Reflective and insightful self-evaluation incorporates a range of stakeholder views, and is accurate in its assessment of the school. Governors prioritise the religious character of the school and significant monitoring of the school's religious character is undertaken by the incumbent. Other governors monitor informally. Consequently, there is a limited strategic view on the impact of the religious character on whole school improvement. Statutory requirements for the provision of RE and collective worship are met and both areas are ably led and managed.

SIAMS report (March 2018) Trottiscliffe CE (VC) primary school, Kent, ME19 5EB