

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Katharine's Knockholt Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School

Main Road, Knockholt, Kent TN14 7LS

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Rochester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Kent
Date of inspection	22 January 2018
Date of last inspection	13 December 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 118713
Headteacher	Sarah-Jane Tormey
Inspector's name and number	Anne Southgate 820

School context

St Katharine's has 198 pupils on roll. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A significant number of pupils travel from outside the village to attend the school. A lower than average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. Fewer pupils than the national average have special needs or disabilities. Fewer than average are from disadvantaged backgrounds. There has been significant building work at the school over the last ten years. This has enabled the school to expand.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Katharine's as a Church of England school are good

- This is a school which values each individual and allows them to flourish.
- The partnership with the church is highly effective in supporting learning and in enhancing worship.
- Religious education (RE) is challenging and creative and this is reflected in the excellent displays around the school.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that everyone in the school community understands the explicit Christian reasons for the school's vision and values, so that this is clear to all.
- Increase active participation in collective worship so that all pupils are more engaged and have greater ownership of worship.
- Find ways to help teachers to become more accurate in their assessment of RE.

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

In September 2017, school leaders identified that the school was underpinned by the values of love, forgiveness and truth. These values are now explicit in documentation and they are used in day to day school life. The values help pupils to reflect on their behaviour and, as a result, behaviour is of a very high standard. Leaders, including governors, have a clear understanding of the Christian roots of these values. Pupils have a general sense that these are Christian values, but they are less able to explain how this is the case. St Katharine's is a school where each individual is valued as a unique creation of God. This means that leaders work to enable all to flourish and to develop their talents whatever they may be. The school is inclusive and forgiving, so that pupils are given fresh starts. Pupils who are new to the school are helped to settle by the exemplary nature of other pupils' attitudes and behaviour. The very good behaviour, underpinned by Christian values, supports learning. This enables pupils to achieve standards which are at least in line with national averages.

The reflection areas in each classroom often enable pupils to reflect, to pray and to respond to questions posed. In some classrooms, these areas are not given sufficient room to be effective. The prayer tree in the hall allows pupils to offer prayers as they wait in the dinner queue. Displays around the school are of a high quality and they challenge pupils to think deeply. RE has an important place in the curriculum and it makes a strong contribution to the Christian character of the school. RE makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. RE helps pupils to have an understanding of the global nature of Christianity. This is aided by the school's close links with Gambia and by the celebration of African Christian traditions. This supports the pupils' appreciation and valuing of people who are different from themselves.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Pupils are respectful during collective worship and there is a sense of calm. Class teachers attend the majority of acts of worship and they are becoming more involved in leading worship. Pupils are keen to participate actively in worship and they have some opportunities to do so. For example, pupils enjoy singing and they often volunteer to read. Pupils are often passive listeners in worship and they would like to have more opportunities to be actively engaged. Worship is securely rooted in biblical stories. The plans for worship are well considered and they are constructed jointly with the rector. This means that pupils are gaining a good knowledge of the Bible. Some Anglican traditions are observed. Leaders often choose to use Anglican greeting and sending sentences. Traditional prayers such as the Lord's prayer are used frequently. Pupils understand key Christian beliefs. They use, for example, the parts of an apple to illustrate that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils can relate the messages of acts of worship to their own lives. This supports pupils' positive attitudes and it encourages them to help others. As a result, the school supports a wide range of charities such as the Samaritan's Purse and Children of Gambia. Major Christian festivals are celebrated, often at the church. These services are frequently planned and led by Year 6 pupils. At Christmas, pupils enjoy singing carols at a local care home. They show maturity and compassion singing to people with dementia. Pupils generally value their time in collective worship. They make comments such as, 'our school gives time to God', and 'you can share your deepest thoughts with God'. No one is withdrawn from worship. Whilst a very few choose not to participate, they all show respect for the beliefs of others.

Monitoring of worship has led to improvements. For example, younger pupils were less engaged in worship, so weekly Key Stage worship has been introduced. This enables the worship leader to tailor the act of worship to the age of the pupils. Pupils experience an increasing range of styles of worship as the leadership broadens. Representatives of other Christian groups such as the Salvation Army sometimes lead worship. Pupils would like to be more involved in leading aspects of worship themselves.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Pupils are enthused by the approach to RE, based on 'Understanding Christianity' resources which is built around questions. They enjoy the opportunities which they have to respond in a range of creative ways. These often include art and craft, as well as drama and a range of writing styles. Teachers engage pupils with skilful questioning and enjoyable activities. For example, one teacher had made a board game to reinforce pupils' knowledge of biblical stories. RE has a central place in the school curriculum. This is exemplified by high quality displays, such as that in the school library. This links the books that each class is reading to Christian themes being studied in RE. Pupils, therefore, understand the relevance of RE to their lives and to their learning. Standards in RE are at least as good as

those in other core subjects, such as English. The new RE leader is an experienced school leader. She supports teachers well, particularly in the introduction of the new syllabus 'Understanding Christianity'. As a result, most of the teaching is at least good and some is very good. Pupils' attitudes to RE are positive. They enjoy being challenged to think deeply, 'we look deeper and learn more than you thought you could'.

The church is used as an effective resource for RE and the rector is a very helpful source of theological expertise for teachers. Christianity forms the major part of the RE curriculum but pupils also enjoy learning about the beliefs of others. A Sikh parent has shared his beliefs with pupils and this enables them to learn about another living faith first hand. The RE leader monitors learning by observing lessons and scrutinising pupils' books. This enables her to identify both stronger and weaker practice and to offer support. She has introduced new assessment procedures and this means that she can monitor pupils' progress. Teachers are not secure in their assessment because they have not yet moderated their outcomes with other schools.

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

The headteacher has a vision based on enabling 'every child to flourish in their potential as a child of God'. She identifies how this impacts on the daily life of the school, for example, by valuing the achievements of all pupils whatever they may be. Others in the school are less able to articulate the vision in Christian terms. There is a shared understanding that the vision and values have an impact, particularly on wellbeing and on behaviour. Self-evaluation is honest and accurate. The views of all stakeholders are sought on a regular basis. As a result, leaders have a clear understanding of the school's performance and distinctiveness. This enables the construction of helpful plans for improvement. The partnership with the church is positive and strong. Pupils sing in the church choir and the school promotes the Sunday 'early bird' service, which has increased in attendance. The rector is an invaluable resource for the school, providing support and theological expertise. The diocese has been instrumental in helping to secure new buildings, which have enhanced day to day life at the school. Diocesan training is accessed and recommendations have been acted upon. There is an effective partnership with other local church schools and good practice is shared. Parents are very largely supportive of the school. They like the fact that, 'children are valued for who they are'.

RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements. Leaders have acted to ensure that development points from the previous denominational inspection have been addressed. Teachers share ideas and they receive appropriate training to help them to develop as future leaders of church schools. The RE leader is supported well, for example by being given time to attend diocesan training and to visit other church schools. There is a genuine desire among leaders to continue to improve as a church school.

SIAMS report January 2018 St Katharine's CE primary (VA) Knockholt Kent TN14 7LS