

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Christ Church Ramsgate Church of England (VC) Junior School (academy)

London Road, Ramsgate, Kent CT11 0ZZ

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Canterbury
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Kent
Date of inspection	19 May 2017
Date of last inspection	19 April 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Junior 139255
Headteacher	Neil Tucker
Inspector's name and number	Virginia Corbyn 86

School context

Christ Church Ramsgate CE junior school has 251 pupils on roll in eight classes, two per year group. 34.2% of pupils are in receipt of pupil premium funding and 12% have a special educational need. There are 8.7% of pupils with English as an additional language. About 10% of pupils regularly attend church. There is a small number of pupils who belong to other faiths. The school's last Ofsted inspection took place in October 2016. It was graded as good in all areas with spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) being cited as a particular strength.

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

- Explicit Christian values are fuelling the achievement, personal development and wellbeing of this school community, providing a clear sense of purpose and direction across the life of the school.
- Mutually beneficial relationships which encourage and support the pupils and their families lie at the heart of all that is done in the school.
- Collective worship provides a valued opportunity for all members of the school community to find their own calm, spiritual space.
- Religious education (RE) makes a significant contribution to the SMSC development of pupils.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that pupils have a fuller understanding of the role of RE especially in developing a depth of understanding about big religious ideas (concepts) and puzzling questions.
- Extend the role of the faith team in monitoring and evaluating how the school can improve as a church school.
- Build on existing contacts with parents to help them to understand how the school serves its children and families by supporting spiritual development well.

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

Since its previous denominational inspection, the school has embarked upon a considerable journey by embedding a set of effective Christian values across its community and by becoming an academy. The current headteacher and school leaders have a vision for this school that is both ambitious and aspirational. This vision is rooted in the Christian values of friendship, trust, love, peace, hope and forgiveness. They are understood as distinctively Christian 'because they come from the Bible and from the stories there' as one pupil explained. The embedding and the modelling of the values means that pupils make good progress over time in a range of subjects. In the majority of cases, disadvantaged pupils are achieving well in relation to their individual starting points and they perform better than other such pupils nationally. Parents are able to articulate the security which this church school provides by saying that their children are very well supported, whatever their talents or their needs. Pupils and parents trust teachers to do the best for them. Attendance is good because pupils enjoy coming to school. They are proud when their class records the highest weekly attendance figure. Strong and supportive relationships at every level are demonstrated by all members of the school community. These relationships, characterised by the school's Christian values, have been a key factor in the improvements made in and by the school over the last five years.

SMSC is very well supported and evidenced in a number of ways. Opportunities for prayer are offered across the school day, including at lunchtime and at the end of the day. Pupils' own prayers are included as part of worship and there is an annual prayer spaces event organised by one of the governors. This means that the pupils understand that prayer is a natural part of their everyday experience and that it is accessible for all of them 'even for those who do not believe'. Parents are confident that the school provides a clear Christian moral framework for their children, whether they have a faith or not. RE increases pupils' understanding of other cultures, for example through visits to the synagogue and to the mosque. They can articulate some of the reasons for the importance of RE, including that of helping them 'to know about the different beliefs of people we might meet in our lives'. However, pupils' understanding of the nature and purpose of RE is relatively limited especially in relation to religious concepts and big questions. Pupils enjoy the variety of learning in their RE especially when this is about Islam, Sikhism and Judaism. They are also able to express their personal views clearly within RE. An example of this in Year 6 was considering whether or not they believe that the use of violence is ever justified. RE, therefore, makes a good contribution to the pupils' SMSC development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Pupils recognise the importance of worship for the school as a community, 'We all gather – even if you are not religious, you can just think'. They respond well to an invitation within worship to find their personal quiet space. This means that they understand the importance of reflection within the busyness of the school day. Adapted thoughtfully using the diocesan planning, worship is an important vehicle for improving the shared understanding of the school's Christian values. These provide a focus for Christian and biblical teaching as the place in which the school's values are grounded. Pupils respond well to thinking about how they can apply the values in their everyday lives. Particular pupils are named and praised during celebration worship for demonstrating the Christian values, during their learning and through their behaviour and their attitudes. Pupils know that worship is important and that their worship is an important part of their identity as a church school. Worship has a clear shape which includes elements of Anglican liturgy. God is acknowledged on a daily basis as Father, Son and Holy Spirit through the lighting of three candles to start worship. The faith team has an increasing role within worship. These pupils have moved from being helpers to becoming more confident leaders. Class and key stage worship provide valuable opportunities for focussed, age appropriate times of worship and are popular with the pupils. They plan the worship in church for the major Christian festivals which are an important means of linking the church with the school. Increasing numbers of parents are attending worship in church and say that this is what makes Christ Church 'special and unique' as a church school. Parents are not invited into weekly worship. Some monitoring and evaluation of worship is carried out by staff and governors. Pupils have well considered views about worship but pupil voice is not currently driving change and improvement in this area.

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

The headteacher, supported well by governors, effectively leads a staff team which is committed to each individual pupil 'with God's help'. He sets clear expectations and he has created a supportive environment to ensure that they are met, especially for children and families who need high levels of support and intervention. This results in an

inclusive community in which going the extra mile is seen as the responsibility of all members of staff. By living out the Christian values, all members of the school community ensure that they have created a distinctive ethos where pupils achieve well, both academically and personally. This has resulted in positive outcomes for pupils, including for disadvantaged pupils, the most able and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Living the values means that high quality relationships lie at the heart of the success of the school. All stakeholders describe the good levels of trust and support between adults and pupils. Staff speak about the encouragement they receive on a daily basis from school leaders which they, in turn, feel confident in passing on to their pupils. The importance of spiritual development for all, characterised by peace and calm, underpins the good leadership and management of the school.

Governors have a good understanding of RE and collective worship through their monitoring of these aspects of school life. This means that statutory requirements are met and that the recently appointed leader for RE and worship feels well supported. There is an effective and detailed plan in place to ensure that these areas are given a high profile. New materials for 'Understanding Christianity' are being introduced with appropriate training opportunities for teachers. Staff recruitment takes into account the needs of the school as a church school. Members of the senior leadership team and governors are included in monitoring and evaluating the school as a church school. This means that planning for the future leadership of church schools is being addressed and that the understanding of church school distinctiveness is being developed. The diocese has supported the school well, both in its conversion to academy status and through subsequent training for developing its ethos, worship and RE. There are a number of ways in which other effective partnerships contribute to the strength of this church school, including those with other local schools and with the local community. Links with the church have been maintained over recent years, with the church being used as a teaching resource and as a centre for worship at the end of each term. Parents value the openness with which faith is explored within the school. However, they have a limited understanding of the contribution which daily worship, prayer and reflection make to their children's spiritual and holistic development. Since the previous denominational inspection, the school has improved as a church school and demonstrates the capacity to continue to do so.

SIAMS report (May 2017) Christ Church CE junior (VC) school Ramsgate Kent CT11 0ZZ