

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Salway Ash Church of England VA Primary School

Salway Ash, Bridport. Dorset. DT6 5JE

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Diocese

Salisbury

Previous SIAS inspection grade

Outstanding

Local authority

Dorset

Date of inspection

24 November 2017

Date of last inspection

15 November 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

Maintained VA 113809

Headteacher

Lisa Crew

Inspector's name and number

Marcia Headon 761

School context

Salway Ash Church of England Voluntary Aided School is a much smaller than average primary school. There are 120 pupils on roll aged 4-11. It serves a rural catchment area around Salway Ash. It is heavily over-subscribed. The vast majority of children are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is below the national average but the proportion with special educational needs/disabilities is well above the national average. In 2015 the school had a major building programme. In 2017, it was commended by the Minister of State for Schools for being among the top 1% of primary schools for achievement in reading.

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

- Very strong Christian values underpin all aspects of school life and have a significant impact on the pupils' academic and personal development.
- Extensive partnerships with the local church and wider community enhance the learning of all within the school.
- The clarity of vision exercised by the headteacher and governors means that the school's Christian distinctiveness is constantly reviewed and enhanced.

Areas to improve

- Develop the effectiveness of assessment in religious education (RE) by comparing work with other schools so that there is a greater assurance of the accuracy of the judgements made.
- Ensure that pupils develop a greater understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith and how the church operates at a national level.

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

The Christian values of love, hope, peace, endurance, forgiveness, humility, compassion and justice are seen by pupils as the compelling factors which makes Salway Ash distinctive and so special. As one commented, 'if we did not have our values, the school would be a very different place.' They explain how the values are strongly rooted in biblical precedents and the teachings of Jesus. The environment is welcoming and enhanced by colourful displays of pupils' work and photographs which show the values in action. The values are prominent on the school's website and they influence every aspect of school life. They are built into all the learning. Policies such as inclusion, equality and behaviour are all rooted in the strong Christian values. Pupils treat one another and adults with respect and help one another when in difficulty showing friendship, especially when new pupils join the school. Older pupils enjoy helping younger ones, which continues when they leave Salway Ash. A group of ex-pupils have formed a church group which is now organising a nativity play with pupils from Salway Ash. The school meets the needs of pupils very well. Achievement in phonics at key stage 1 is above national at expected levels. Pupil achievement at key stage 2 is also above national expected levels and in greater depth for nearly all subjects. Progress at key stage 2 is significantly above average in reading and above for writing and maths. This is a direct result of the belief of the staff in pupils, the value placed on each pupil and the extra support given to those who need it. Pupils know that if they embrace the value of perseverance and work hard they will succeed. Pupils feel respected and valued and are treated as individuals. They know that their talents are fostered, and their hopes encouraged. Banners hung in the entrance hall showing leavers' names indicate their hopes for the future. The values of the school influence the moral and social development of pupils exceptionally well. Behaviour in the school is outstanding, with pupils showing politeness to visitors and staff. There are very few incidents of poor behaviour and pupils know that if things go wrong they will be treated fairly and will be forgiven. They, equally, show forgiveness, although they acknowledge how hard this is at times. Attendance is well above national averages and pupils clearly enjoy coming to school. Salway Ash is a happy and highly inclusive school in which those of all faiths and none are welcomed equally. There is an agreed definition of spirituality across the school and opportunities are given for pupils to develop this. The growth of spirituality was seen in the eco-project where pupils moved from thinking about their own needs to those of others and then to the needs of the wider planet. The curriculum is creative and inspiring. The values of peace and justice impact on the cultural development of pupils. Older year groups are confident in talking about shared values across faiths. However, pupils are less clear that Christianity is a multi-cultural world faith or how the Christian church operates at a national level.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Pupils are highly positive about collective worship. They respond to it in a very reflective manner and explain how they take ideas and thoughts from it into their wider life. They enjoy coming together, listening to Bible stories and the messages they bring and participating in worship. They love singing. Collective worship is a happy occasion and adults who attend also say they consider it a time of reflection and praise which 'sets them up for the day'. Worship is very carefully planned by the local team vicar with the headteacher. The vicar leads worship on one day a week and sets the theme for the rest of the week. Her acts of worship are appreciated by the children, who enjoy her style which encourages them to discuss. She makes her messages very understandable to all. Worship builds on the chosen theme throughout the week so that a depth of understanding grows, helped by reflection time in class worship. Years 5 and 6 plan and lead worship on one day a week. They enjoy this opportunity immensely and are increasingly creative in the way they approach worship. Years 3 and 4 routinely lead prayers. The school follows an Anglican pattern of worship, beginning with a greeting said by a pupil to which all respond. This is followed by Bible stories, singing and prayer. A pupil also gives a final sending-out sentence. The school hall is a suitable environment for worship and a focal point with a candle and a Bible creates a good atmosphere. At festival times, the school holds services in the local church and these are very special events for pupils and parents. Experience days, for example at Easter, run by the vicar and members of the local church, have helped to increase pupils' understanding of the significance of major festivals. Evaluation of collective worship is extremely thorough. Not only are pupils and staff asked for their comments, but the vicar then conducts small focus groups to evaluate them further. The findings are acted upon. As a direct result there is now greater pupil involvement in leading and planning worship. Pupils of all ages are developing their understanding of the Trinity through explanations in a variety of ways in collective worship and in RE. Prayer is very central to the life of the school and the approach taken increases pupils' spiritual development. Reflective corners in classrooms and prayer spaces are used very well. Pupils are taught how to pray and are encouraged to think about the real meaning and purpose of prayer. Prayer trees are available for individual thoughts and in one classroom a graffiti wall allowed the pupils to write down matters which they felt needed prayer. This was very movingly used on the morning after the Manchester bombings.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Teachers set high expectations in religious education and standards are above national age-related expectations by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6. Work in books shows pupils in all year groups making very good progress from their starting points. The introduction of 'Understanding Christianity' has had a significant effect upon pupils' depth of knowledge and has increased the rigour in the exploration of Christian concepts. Its use alongside some units from the 'Discovery' scheme means that pupils are being encouraged to think more deeply. Planning in RE is of a very high quality. It is regularly reviewed and adjusted and evaluated to ensure it is meeting the needs of pupils. A scrutiny of the books in RE shows a variety of challenging activities which are designed to deepen pupils' understanding as well as to make them reflect. Pupils enjoy their RE, it is a time when they not only learn new things but also can make comparisons between different faiths. It has a high profile across the school, with many displays in corridors of the work undertaken. Teaching is at least good. In a Year 2 class, pupils were working with models which they had made to devise story lines and questions which the wise men and shepherds may have asked of Mary and Joseph. The pupils engaged in this task with enthusiasm and their questions were very astute. The teacher also introduced the pupils to different representations of the nativity scene from art and this widened their cultural perspectives. She asked challenging questions of the pupils and through this enhanced their understanding. The teaching of other faiths is undertaken in the third term of the year, but pupils could confidently talk about Jewish festivals and the pillars of Islam from the work done last year. Assessment in RE has changed to reflect the new assessment processes in the school. It is still developing. Teachers have moderated their work amongst themselves but to date there has been no external moderation with other schools. The subject is very well-led and resourced and the RE coordinator shows a very significant depth of knowledge. She is highly organised and systematic and has monitored the teaching of RE across the school very thoroughly. The action plan for RE is well-developed. In lessons in RE, links are made to the values of the school and the subject makes an excellent contribution to the spiritual, moral and social development of pupils.

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

The headteachers' vision that every child has a God-given light within them and the school's job is to encourage the light to shine is well known. She strongly promotes the school's Christian mission and values. The school's Christian distinctiveness and ethos is valued by pupils, staff, parents and the wider community. The headteacher leads by example and staff speak of how she knows every child, is infinitely patient, kind and compassionate. Leaders know the strengths of the school well. Their evaluation of its effectiveness and distinctiveness, both of its performance and as a church school, is extremely thorough and very wide-ranging. It covers staff, pupils, parents and governors. It is entirely realistic. They have clear plans for the areas which they wish to develop, and these plans are regularly monitored, evaluated and adjusted as necessary. The school has made very strong progress since the previous inspection and has addressed the areas for development very fully. The headteacher is very well-supported by the team vicar who makes a significant contribution to the life of the school, not only in collective worship but in running a choir, helping staff with reflection times and providing pastoral support to all. Foundation governors are very active in supporting the school. They work tirelessly on its behalf and, as many are parents, they know the school intimately. They have conducted surveys of the parents' views to evaluate the Christian distinctiveness. The governing body contributes hugely to setting the strategic direction, ensuring there is challenge but also support for the school, and in seeking ways to enhance the Christian ethos of the school. The school has excellent links with local churches and wider community. It pays regular visits to Salway Ash church and sometimes pupils' work is displayed there. The church community has helped with the 'Prayer Spaces' and 'Experience' days and regularly prays for the school. The parochial church council from both Salway Ash Church and Netherbury Church have visited the school and they receive regular reports on the work of the school. The headteacher and governors take their training needs seriously and have attended training with the Diocese. Last summer, Year 6 leavers attended the service at Salisbury Cathedral, thus enhancing links with Salisbury. Parents are entirely positive about the school. In a recent survey, all parents agreed that the school is a strong church school and a caring institution based on clear Christian values. As one parent said, 'the values are like a raspberry ripple in this school'.

The school meets statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report November 2017 Salway Ash CE VA Primary School. Bridport. Dorset DT6 5JA