

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Dallington CE Primary School

The Street Dallington ,TN21 9NH	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Chichester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	East Sussex
Name of federation	Woodlands
Date of inspection	20 June 2018
Date of last inspection	12 February 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 114498
Executive Headteacher Head of School	Inez Morse Paul Cox
Inspector's name and number	Rosemary Appleby 749

School context

Dallington CE Primary School is smaller than the average primary school with 110 on roll. The executive headteacher and head of school were appointed in September 2017 and 2014 respectively. In September 2014 the school joined Broad Oak and Punnetts Town County Primary and became the third school in the Woodlands Federation. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average as is those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and most pupils come from a White British heritage. Attendance has recently improved and is now in line with national average.

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

- Explicit and embedded Christian values have a significant influence on pupils' daily lives resulting in exemplary behaviour and positive attitudes to learning.
- Passionate leadership from the school leadership team ensures that the Christian ethos is continually evolving for the benefit of all children. They live out and promote the vision of the school which is driven by the Christian character of the school.
- The effective partnership with parents and the local church significantly contribute to the promotion of the school's Christian values.

Areas to improve

- Develop pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith to enable them to develop a greater appreciation of the global nature of Christianity.
- Strengthen the process of self-evaluation as a church school through increased formal monitoring of all aspects of the school's Christian distinctiveness, gathering robust evidence of how the Christian character impacts on all learners.
- Ensure that worship involves leaders from different Christian traditions, so that worship provides a richness of experiences for the school community.

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

Dallington CE school provides a high level of nurture and care to its school community through living out its school vision to provide 'a secure caring community providing children with Christian values that will give them confidence in school and in the wider world'. This is evident in the inclusive and positive caring relationships across the school community and the excellent behaviour seen around the school. Stakeholders have a shared understanding and ownership of the school's Christian values of thankfulness, love, respect, forgiveness, friendship and hope. This is because the values are explicitly displayed around the school and discussed both in newsletters and during the school's weekly church services held at the parish church of St Giles. They are displayed as a jigsaw puzzle where the values all fit together. Pupils are secure in their understanding of these values and are confident in articulating that the value of forgiveness helps them to forgive others because 'Jesus forgave everyone their sins'. These values have been linked to biblical references and to the school's learning powers and reinforce that the school community is driven by its Christian character in all areas of school life. Parents value the happy environment of the school and the promotion of Christian values that benefit their children while at Dallington. They see the value of respect as transferring into secondary school where their children are effectively equipped to 'succeed as decent human beings'. They say that at home their children enthusiastically talk about prayer, worship, religious education (RE) and values. The school inspires pupils to talk about Christian beliefs both within and outside of school. An emphasis on the importance of living a life of integrity based on personal beliefs alongside a style of teaching which encourages reflection ensures that religious education (RE) has an effective impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of all learners. The RE leader has recently revised the subject overview and linked RE enquiry based topics to the school's Christian values. This has raised the profile of the Christian values and RE. However, there has not been sufficient time since the introduction the new RE overview for this to be embedded across all classes. Pupils learn about Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Islam in RE and through this work they develop compassion, empathy and respect for other cultures. They know that learning about other religions is important because 'the school is not forcing you to be a Christian'; it's giving you the opportunity to learn about others and to be respectful to everyone. Pupils link this work to the values of respect and love. However, although some pupils are aware that there are different traditions of Christianity, pupils' understanding of the global nature of Christianity is not yet secure. Pupils have been interviewed by the RE leader and answers illustrate that they enjoy RE because they like 'learning about stories in the Bible and different religions'. Pupils understand that giving money for charity, such as 'Children in Need' links to the values of friendship, love and respect. Reflection areas in each classroom, in the library and the sensory garden prayer tree appropriately extend opportunities for quiet reflection. Displays around the school, such as the mural in the playground of the church with all the pupils in silhouette, provide an environment which reflects the school's foundation and as a result frame reflection in a Christian context. This has a positive impact on pupils' SMSC development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is a very special and distinct time in the school day when Christian values and themes, linked to biblical references, are effectively reinforced. Collective worship themes in school are explicitly linked to the school's weekly service at St Giles church. This both strengthens understanding of Anglican tradition and practice for all participants and ensures that the vision and values of the school remain central to the life of the school community. Parents value the service at St Giles which they say provides them with a 'moment of peace'. Pupils are actively engaged and are respectful through participation in all elements of worship such as responding to the greeting of 'good morning everyone' with 'the Lord is here his spirit is with us', reflection time, and praying. They enjoy learning about the Trinity through interweaving three pieces of wool together into a plait with friends. This visual representation of the Trinity ensures that pupils can name and understand, with confidence, God the Father, God the Son and the God the Holy Spirit as being important. The person of Jesus Christ is evident in collective worship. Pupils know that in worship 'we always light the candle and think of Jesus' and appreciate that worship is inclusive because 'even if you don't believe in religion it teaches you to respect others'. Aspects of Anglican worship such as the structure of gather, engage, respond and send are well established. A cross and candle reinforce Anglican tradition and pupils know that candles are lit because Jesus is the 'light of the world'. A cloth representing the colours of the church year on display during worship strengthens the visual links between church and school worship. Worship is enriched through contributions from clergy from St Giles. The school has been proactive in seeking worship leaders from a range of Christian traditions but as yet none has come forward. Pupils do not, therefore, have practical experience of the breadth of Anglican worship traditions. Pupils know prayer is important because they can respect, thank and speak to God. They enjoy writing prayers for worship at St Giles and saying the Lord's Prayer. They value using puppets to act out the scene between Jesus and his disciples in the garden of Gethsemane. Pupils are aware of biblical material and some can talk about the messages from God in these stories and in parables. However they are less secure when relating biblical material to their own lives. Some pupils can talk about the Old and New testament in the Bible and know that the Old Testament was before Jesus was born.

The collective worship leader plans an appropriate overview for collective worship. However, leaders have not yet regularly monitored and evaluated collective worship. Therefore evaluation does not provide robust evidence to inform future planning and improvement or feed into a strategic improvement cycle. One of the key issues from the last inspection was to develop the role of children in monitoring and evaluating the impact of collective worship and this has been addressed. The pupil ethos group and school council provide a focus for pupil voice and pupils evaluate worship using an effective worship reflection sheet. They are asked to reflect upon and record the message shared and how it will help them to reflect upon Christian values to help them make good decisions. For example; after listening to the story of Jesus feeding the five thousand one pupil reflected that it would help her to be more generous to others. The pupils' ethos group informs future planning such as the inclusion of the themes of hobbies and keeping healthy in the current worship plans. Services are held at St Giles's church at harvest, Easter, Christmas and the end of school year. In addition there is a service for Year 6 leavers at St Leonard's church These services all effectively reinforce Anglican tradition and provide an alternative setting for worship.

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

There is a clear sense of commitment to the Christian foundation of the school from leaders at all levels who passionately articulate their aspirations for the school as a church school. Leadership is driven by the school's mission statement which is underpinned by the school's values which permeate across the curriculum and illustrate that the school has addressed the areas for development from the last inspection to 'develop opportunities for promoting Christian values across the wider curriculum'. For example, learning powers, such as 'I am Curious,' have been linked to Luke 2:41 where Jesus was in the temple asking questions of the teachers. The leadership team work enthusiastically and actively promote the Christian distinctiveness of the school. Staff work as a team and are supportive of the Christian ethos and values of the school. Leaders are committed to membership of the Woodlands Federation and resolute that their Christian distinctiveness will not be diluted. It is clear that the school maintained and developed its Christian character during and since the transition into becoming federated. However, during this time of change leaders acknowledge that their formal paper trail of evidence diminished making it challenging to track actions and progress. The evidence trail is not robust enough to illustrate impact or improvement of the Christian character of the school. In addition a lack of formal evidence gathering, such as discussions with pupils, has resulted in leaders not being secure regarding the extent of the impact of Christian distinctiveness on the school community. The RE action plan and school SIAMS inspection action plan contain appropriate elements for development of Christian distinctiveness. However, because there have not been regular action plans since the last inspection, it is challenging to formally track improvements that have taken place. Governors are enthusiastic and committed to the Christian ethos of the school. Governors' visits are mostly informal and not discussed at governors' main federation meetings. However, the school governors' ethos committee have appropriate terms of reference which includes monitoring and reviewing the school's self-evaluations as a church school. The minutes of their meetings illustrate their commitment to strengthening leaders' formal self - evaluation of Dallington as a church school. They have provided questionnaires to parents and delegated the RE leader to undertake pupil interviews regarding the Christian distinctiveness of the school. This has provided them with an evidence base for formal strategic planning. The ethos group lead a prayer group in school and this is well attended by members of the wider community as well as governors. RE is valued and the subject leader has attended federation subject meetings, training on the Understanding Christianity project and begun the national professional qualification for middle leaders. This has impacted positively on her ability to support staff across the school and review the provision for RE. Partnerships with the local church community are good, mutually enriching, and are effective in bringing a greater understanding of Anglican life. Clergy from St Giles's lead worship and provide Bibles for use in school. During interviews candidates are questioned about their commitment to the school's Christian distinctiveness to ensure that the school appoints staff committed to promoting a Christian ethos. Parents speak warmly of the school where their children experience a nurturing and family environment. The arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements.

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