



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Littlebourne (VC) Church of England Primary School

Church Road, Littlebourne CT3 IXS	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Canterbury
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Good
Local authority	Kent
Date/s of inspection	27, 30 January 2017
Date of last inspection	1 March 2012
School's unique reference number	118657
Headteacher	Stella Byrne
Executive headteacher	Ren Chinnadurai
Inspector's name and number	Anne Southgate 820

School context

Littlebourne is a smaller than average sized primary school. There is a reception class and three mixed aged classes. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportions of pupils with special needs and those for whom there is extra funding due to social disadvantage are above national averages. After a period of instability in leadership, the current head of school was appointed on a part-time basis in February 2015. She has led the school full-time since September 2015. The school was supported by a community school from September 2014. The governors and diocese then worked together to secure the support of Bridge and Patricxbourne Church of England school, whose headteacher is currently executive headteacher of Littlebourne. The local church is currently without a vicar.

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

- Current leaders have acted swiftly to re-establish a clear Christian character in the school.
- The renewed Christian character has had a very positive impact on behaviour, wellbeing and on achievement.
- The well-established relationship with the local church adds to the sense of community, and supports pupils' spiritual development.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that all stakeholders understand that the school's values are based on explicitly Christian teaching.
- Increase pupil leadership and involvement in acts of worship, so that they are more actively engaged in worship more often, as recommended in the previous denominational inspection.
- Make all of the classroom prayer areas more interactive to deepen pupils' thinking and to encourage them to reflect more deeply.

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

The school has experienced a turbulent time, during which the Christian ethos was not a priority. However, the school now has clear Christian values of hope, courage, forgiveness, peace, friendship, community and love. These values are known by all stakeholders. Many pupils can articulate how these values affect their daily lives, particularly in relation to their behaviour. As a result, behaviour is very good. Whilst the school's website makes clear links between the values and their biblical basis, this connection is not evident or widely known in the school. The restored Christian character means that pupils enjoy coming to school and, consequently, attendance is high. There is a renewed sense of being a team and a Christian community, where all are cared for. Adults working in the school feel valued and they comment on the fact that they are now a 'happy and harmonious team'. As a result of the improved well-being of all, achievement has risen and is now above national averages in some areas. The school is implementing question-led learning across the curriculum. This is helping pupils to become less passive in their learning and to think more deeply. Links are made between Christian teaching and the curriculum, for example in the older pupils' learning about 'The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe'. Pupils were able to consider how this could represent Jesus' sacrifice. As a result, pupils are helped to reflect, and they develop well spiritually, morally, socially and culturally.

Pupils' attitudes to religious education (RE) have improved under the leadership of the current head of school and they are now very largely positive. Pupils show interest in and respect for the beliefs of others. Teachers use a wide range of resources, such as films and artefacts, to help pupils to understand the differences between people of faith. As a result, pupils have a growing understanding of the diversity of religions in the world.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship sets the school's values in their Christian context. They are often related to biblical stories, for example the value of peace was related to Jesus calming the storm. Pupils are beginning to understand these connections, but they do not often remember them. Pupils show great respect and reverence during acts of worship. They sit still, listen carefully, sing enthusiastically and join in saying prayers. However, they are often passive. Pupils say that they enjoy worship most when they are actively involved, for example through drama. The school council has led worship, and pupils take responsibility for aspects of worship, such as lighting the candle. Anglican responses are used, and the church's year is followed. Major Christian festivals are celebrated in the church with parents, who attend in high numbers. This gives pupils a good understanding of local Anglican practice. Although key Christian beliefs, such as the Trinity, are talked about in collective worship, pupils have a very limited understanding of these. Prayer is a feature of each school day. Prayer areas are established in classrooms. The area in the oldest pupils' classroom is interactive and helps pupils to reflect, but this is not consistent throughout the school.

Worship is led by a growing number of adults, including teachers and a church worker from Canterbury. Before the vicar retired, she was a very regular contributor to school worship, both in church and at school. This means that pupils experience a range of settings and styles of leadership in worship. Collective worship encourages pupils to act to help others. This is seen in the way that they treat others in school, often referring to the school's values, and also in their actions to support charities, such as the local food bank. Governors monitor worship and write helpful reports. This addresses an action point from the previous denominational inspection. Pupils' views are usually gathered informally, but these have led to changes, such as to the inclusion of more singing in worship.

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

The head of school, supported by governors and by the executive headteacher, acted swiftly on her appointment to restore the Christian character of the school after a period of neglect. She has prioritised the development of Littlebourne as a church school and has made it an objective in the school improvement plan. Leaders have a clear, shared purpose to establish a Christian learning community and to serve the community. The governing body, together with the diocese, wisely secured the support of another local church school, when Littlebourne was not performing well. As a result, the school has improved rapidly in all areas. Very little support is now

required. Diocesan training has been accessed by leaders and this has helped to restore the Christian character of the school quickly. The learning from training is shared with all governors and staff. Relationships with the local church are strong and established and they are continuing whilst the church waits for a new vicar. A regular prayer day has been established in the church that brings the school, congregation and local community together. A foundation governor joins parochial church council meetings. This demonstrates the strong desire on the part of both the school and the church to work in partnership. Parents comment on the rapid improvement in the school, and they feel welcomed and included in the school community.

Self-evaluation as a church school is regular and accurate. It involves all stakeholders. This has helped leaders to improve the school further, for example by including more questions in RE lessons to engage pupils further. The action points from the previous denominational inspection have only been partially addressed. However, the head of school's priority has rightly been to re-establish the Christian character of the school, which she has done successfully. Statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met. The head of school currently leads RE, but she is preparing a recently qualified teacher to take over this role. This will help to distribute leadership and help this new teacher to grow as a potential future leader in a church school. Littlebourne has been on a rapid journey of improvement over the last two years. Leaders have ensured that the Christian character is now clear and that it is having a positive impact on school improvement.

SIAMS report January 2017 Littlebourne Church of England School, Littlebourne CT3 1XS