

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Wickhambreaux Church of England Primary School

The Street, Wickhambreaux, Canterbury. Kent. CT3 1RN

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Canterbury
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Kent
Date of inspection	19 October 2017
Date of last inspection	26 September 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary Voluntary Controlled 118660
Headteacher	Ann Campling
Inspector's name and number	Canon Linda Burton 462

School context

Wickhambreaux is a smaller than average rural primary school with 123 pupils in four classes. The pupils are predominantly White British, with a small number from minority ethnic groups. The school has been rated as outstanding by Ofsted since 2007. The proportion of pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs is below average. The proportion of pupils for which additional pupil premium funding is received is well below both county and national averages. The parish church is part of a group of four rural churches whose priest left in July 2016. A new priest has not yet been appointed.

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

- Strong and visionary leadership, clearly articulating the school's distinctive Christian ethos, sustains very high standards of progress and attainment of all pupils.
- Pupils, parents, staff and governors recognise and greatly value the positive impact which the school's Christian character has on the life of the school community and on all of its individual members.
- Pupils respond positively and thoughtfully to challenging questions and issues in religious education (RE) lessons. Through this, RE makes a significant contribution to the Christian life of the school.
- The provision of opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is very good, resulting in very positive responses from pupils.

Areas to improve

- Prioritise school leaders' formal monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the school's Christian distinctiveness, so that this can be used to inform strategic planning and to drive school improvement.
- Enrich pupils' experience of collective worship by enabling them to lead acts of worship in school.
- Establish a robust cycle of evaluation of collective worship by the whole school community which incorporates pupil input to ensure ongoing improvement.

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

Wickhambreaux's school community is absolutely clear that this is a church school. Its Christian ethos is obvious and deeply embedded in all aspects of its life. An area of significant development in the school's Christian character since the previous denominational inspection has been how, over the course of the last year, all of its members together have redefined its core Christian values as love, trust and community. The core values are displayed throughout the school and are based on biblical teaching. Most pupils are able to root the redefined school values in biblical stories and relate them to their own lives. Parents are highly appreciative of how the school's Christian ethos and values help their children to understand how to live their lives more fully. The school's mission statement is 'to embed its core values of trust, love and community by providing a memorable childhood for all'. This is lived out day to day through the outstanding level of engagement with all of its pupils and their families. The school's Christian ethos encourages pupils to be the best that they can be in every aspect of school life. Both academic progress and personal care for all members of its community are central to the school's Christian ethos. The impact of this is both profound and positive. Pupil progress and attainment are outstanding. Results and trends over time demonstrate exceptional rates of progress. Pupils who are in any way vulnerable receive targeted support which enables them to make appropriate levels of progress over time, and the school makes every effort to work with and to support their families. The headteacher is an outstanding role model and she and all other members of staff live out the school's values. These values shape relationships between all members of its community. Parents talk enthusiastically about the very positive effect that membership of the school's caring, supportive, inclusive Christian family has on their children. They describe how pupils of all ability levels and backgrounds are loved, known as individuals and given the best opportunities possible. They report that their children love coming to school. One parent said that their child 'skips out of school and says he has had a brilliant day.' The impact of this is that attendance rates are high and pupils' attitudes and behaviour throughout the school day are exemplary.

A wide range of activities and strategies supports the flourishing of positive relationships between pupils. These include school council, peer mentoring, pupil leadership training and the 'worry boxes' in each classroom (which invariably remain empty because pupils are happy). The result is that relationships are strong. Pupils show their care for each other, respect and tolerate each other's differences. Pupils show Christian love in action through their commitment to charitable giving, with donations at the school's very recent harvest festival given to the local Porchlight charity. The school's curriculum is broad and creative. Pupils are enabled to explore and develop their spirituality and are encouraged to reflect on the school's Christian values through a range of creative learning opportunities. Examples include the daily 'extended curriculum,' the rich, extensive music provision, and the imaginative whole school Arts Week. Vibrant, imaginative reflection and prayer areas and interactive displays in classrooms and throughout the building celebrate the school's Christian character. They also provide pupils with opportunities for quiet reflection, to write their own 'thank you' prayers, to say how they feel today or to post up a 'big question' such as, 'how can numbers never end?' Teachers encourage pupils to feel part of the global community. For example, this year's World Book Day involved pupils skyping others across the world. The school takes difference and diversity seriously and RE makes a particular contribution to this. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about their RE lessons. During the inspection, their high level of engagement and excitement in an enquiry-based lesson showed the importance of RE's contribution to the Christian life of the school. This was demonstrated through the ways in which pupils grappled with a variety of biblical texts and considered Christian ideas about God.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The daily act of whole school collective worship is understood by everyone to be central to the school's life. Prayer, responses, bible readings, Christian symbols, music and reflection are used very well. They nurture the spiritual development of all pupils and adults and the sense of the school as a Christian community. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards worship because they feel involved and included. They especially enjoy the singing. As an indication of its importance, worship is well planned round themes which explore aspects of Christian belief and practice based on biblical teaching, Christian festivals and the school's core Christian values. The plans are adapted to take account of events in school life and in the wider world. There is appropriate, age-related exploration of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit in worship. Through worship, pupils develop a good knowledge of the life and teachings of Jesus and of his importance to Christians. They are able to make effective links between parables, Christian values and their own actions. An example is the very effective links made between the pupils' recent involvement in the production of Warhorse in Dover, the parable of the Lost Sheep and love (one of the school's core Christian values). Pupils' responses showed clearly that they fully understood the links and could readily apply the central message to their own lives and situations. The impact of this is seen in pupils' positive relationships and their attitudes towards others. All members of school staff are involved in leading collective worship and, through this, pupils are able to experience a variety of worship styles and approaches. The whole school community gathers to celebrate major festivals in the Church's year with services in St Andrew's church. These are very well supported

by parents. A parent described the recent Harvest festival as ‘an amazing experience.’ There is a clear focus on prayer in collective worship. Pupils have the opportunity to light the candle in preparation for worship, write their own prayers, read prayers, engage in personal reflection and prayer, and respond to the prayers of adult leaders. This is in addition to the daily routine of prayers at lunchtime and at the end of the school day. Pupils participate fully in worship in school and their active involvement in leading the celebration services in the church is well developed. In this way, good progress has been made on the development point in the previous denominational inspection report. There is scope to improve pupils’ confidence in leading entire acts of worship in school and subsequently evaluating these in order to ensure continued future improvements. There is evidence of monitoring and evaluation of collective worship by the collective worship coordinator. This is not done on a sufficiently regular basis and nor is it systematically shared with school senior leaders, pupils, governors and clergy in order to firmly establish a culture of continued improvement.

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

The long-serving and inspirational headteacher has a clear vision for the continuing development of Wickhambreaux as a distinctive church school. She articulates a keen understanding of faith in practice. In order to continue to move the school forward effectively, she has developed a leadership team who share the same vision and determination. Inspired by her example, staff members offer unstinting and enthusiastic commitment to the school. Governors are prepared to hold the school to account. All work very well together to improve and sustain the best possible academic outcomes for all pupils alongside their personal development and wellbeing. This is recognised as a clear expression of the school’s Christian service to its community. In recent years, school leaders have faced disruptions in the school’s life. These include the time without a parish priest and, given the school’s rural context, long-term concerns over the successful recruitment of foundation governors. School leaders have not yet fully prioritised the formal monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the school’s Christian distinctiveness, including collective worship. There is clear evidence of ways in which the school has continued to develop as a church school since the last denominational inspection. The redefinition of the school’s core Christian values resulted from collaborative work by the whole school community to renew and refresh the school’s Christian vision and values. Leaders support the RE leader in undertaking diocesan training and attending professional meetings. He has recently led training for all teachers in the school on the new Understanding Christianity resource. As a result of the training and support they receive, teachers are confident in teaching RE to their classes to a high standard. Succession planning for the deputy headteacher as the future leader of a church school is being implemented. The school is outward-looking and works closely with a collaborative network of schools in a mutually supportive and beneficial relationship. Examples of this include working with Canterbury Teaching Alliance, and with The King’s School Canterbury. It has rightly identified the need to extend its collaborations to share best practice and learn from other church schools. There is good engagement with parents through the active Friends of Wickhambreaux School group. Its close links with the church are being maintained whilst there is currently no priest in post. The school is involved in events in the village and participates in the life of the cathedral. For example, pupils attend cathedral schools days, and the school choir and band perform annually at the Archbishop of Canterbury’s St Nicholas Day celebrations. Statutory requirements for RE and worship are met. Good progress has been made on all development points from the previous denominational inspection report.

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