

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

John Wesley Church of England/Methodist (VA) Primary School

Cuckoo Lane, Singleton, Ashford TN23 5LW

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Canterbury
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Kent
Date of inspection	21 June 2017
Date of last inspection	3 March 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 133627
Headteacher	Gail Spragg
Inspector's name and number	Virginia Corbyn 86

School context

John Wesley Church of England/Methodist primary school will have grown from its original 4 class school in 2007 to a 2 form entry school by September 2017, led by the same headteacher throughout. It is heavily oversubscribed. There are 19% of pupils for whom the school receives extra funding due to social disadvantage and 19.5% of pupils have a special educational need. The school's last Ofsted inspection took place in November 2016 and it was graded as good. Pupils are mainly White British with a small number of other ethnicities. Very few pupils regularly attend a church.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of John Wesley as a Church of England/Methodist school are outstanding

- School leaders effectively lead a staff team who live out their Christian values explicitly, especially that of love, by meeting the individual needs of each pupil and family.
- Collective worship is joyful and thoughtful and plays a key part in enabling the whole school community to clearly demonstrate all of their Christian values day by day.
- Personal reflection upon and enquiry into important questions in religious education (RE) mean that pupils can talk about the importance of the subject for their lives now and in the future.
- The school has a very strong, mutually beneficial and supportive partnership with the local churches, both Anglican and Methodist, which stakeholders commend and value.

Areas to improve

- Extend pupils' understanding of prayer to encompass saying sorry, please and thank you to God in order to deepen the spiritual life of the school.
- Ensure that pupils know how well they are achieving in RE and what they need to do to improve.

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

This is a school driven by its belief that every child should flourish whatever their starting point or their background. Every person matters to the school community and to God. The five Christian values of love, compassion, patience, persistence and forgiveness are central. They provide ways for all members of the school to take practical action to support and encourage each other. Through love and compassion in particular, all staff have contributed to the social and emotional needs of pupils and their families, in order that academic achievement follows. This has resulted in all pupils making good progress. Disadvantaged pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, making good progress from their significantly lower starting points in the early years. For the pupils, there is an understanding that, 'we keep trying together' and 'help others who do not understand' because 'Jesus showed the values to others'. Parents do not so readily articulate the school's Christian values. School staff and leaders are rightly confident that, in their particular context, 'our Gospel values are not about what is just written on the pages of the Bible but how they are lived'. This living out of values has also resulted in outstanding attendance. Families have confidence in the love that surrounds their children and in the openness that they meet whenever they have a concern or a question. This means that they want their children to be in school every day and also that their children want to be there.

Very high quality relationships result in an exceptionally strong staff team, inclusive of those who come in from outside agencies and support services. Governors describe how 'children hold each other up' and parents talk about the care of older pupils for those who are younger. There is an expectation, which is met, that all staff will nurture the pupils during the school day and beyond through wraparound care and many extracurricular activities. This enriches pupils' experiences, particularly in sports and music, which complements well what is offered within the curriculum. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils is strong. Pupils are confident to offer prayers in various ways in school, knowing that this is their way of 'communicating with God' as well as personally reflecting on their lives. They are less certain about prayer which enables them to say sorry, be thankful and to pray for the needs of others. The year 6 'pilgrimage' to Great Chart church encourages pupils to think about life spiritually and as a special journey. Pupils' excellent behaviour is underpinned well by moral and social understanding. RE enables pupils to explore the major world faiths, and to understand that 'even if you are not religious, you need to know about different religions'. This results in a strong sense in the pupils that they must understand why they are different to one another. Also, they understand that this will help them to live better in their world. This, in turn, means that pupils support a range of charities to show their responsibility for their neighbours throughout the world.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

This school community knows what it is to worship together thoughtfully, reverently and joyfully. One governor said that 'going to worship is a joy and a pleasure and what we hear is lived out by everyone for the rest of the day'. Worship is closely linked to the school's Christian values and centres on the person of Jesus. Pupils say that they are engaged and helped by the daily act of worship. They are able to explain that worship is 'about God and helping others' and 'helping me to be a nice person'. The shape of worship, which includes liturgical responses and prayers such as the Lord's Prayer and the Grace, ensures that pupils have a growing understanding of Anglican and Methodist tradition and practice. They have a growing understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which is supported by the RE curriculum. Sustained periods of silent reflection are well used in worship to encourage all those present to apply the messages they hear to their everyday lives. Governors monitor and evaluate worship and the pupil voice is sometimes used to influence its direction. A wide variety of leaders from within and outside the school provide a range of experiences and perspectives for the worshipping community. There are some opportunities for pupils to lead worship, including for major festivals, which gives them the chance to present the Christian message to their parents. Leaders from the Church of England, Methodist and United Reform churches lead worship on a regular basis, including for major Christian festivals. This has resulted in increased engagement with families including through special services and events aimed particularly at children and families, including Messy Church. Parents are increasingly able to articulate the importance of this aspect of the life of the school through their engagement in weekly Friday worship.

The effectiveness of religious education is good

Standards in RE are at least in line, and with some pupils exceeding, national expectations. Teaching is consistently at least good, with some being better. The curriculum created by the headteacher, as RE leader, meets the

particular needs of the pupils at John Wesley and provides options which encourage teachers to be as creative as possible. This means that pupils can talk about the ways in which art and drama, for example, make their RE lessons enjoyable and engaging. Learning from religion is well taught so that pupils value their own opinions and those of others as well as developing the skills to help them to relate to other people. All stakeholders talk about faith being a natural part of the conversations in school because RE is well taught. Pupils understand that RE is about their faith as well as the faith of others, both now and in the future. Big questions are explored thoughtfully in RE. Pupils talk about the biggest questions which include 'what is the point of living on this earth?' and 'what kind of king was Jesus?' Teacher assessment is accurate and recorded in each pupil's book. However, pupils are not able to explain where they are in their RE learning and what they need to do to improve. RE supports the SMSC development of pupils well, especially by using group work and discussion effectively and by encouraging reflection in the pupils. Governors monitor the subject effectively through lesson observations and book scrutiny. Local clergy and church communities are used well to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity.

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

The headteacher leads and drives the vision and values of her school. She is described as inspiring by all those around her. She is clearly supported by all of her school leaders, effectively leading a staff team which is committed to each individual pupil who is seen as known and loved by God. She sets very high expectations and she has created a deeply supportive environment to ensure that they are met. By living out the Christian values, all members of the school community ensure that pupils make very good progress. This puts the school in the top 10% nationally for progress for all pupils. This is achieved through personalised programmes of learning and by 'celebrating every aspect of every child', as one teacher said. School leaders are committed to transforming the lives of all pupils and families in their care. This has resulted in the successful management of a number of very challenging managed moves. Living the values also means that high quality relationships lie at the heart of the success of the school. Pupils talk about 'the teachers who encourage me' and staff members say that they feel 'loved and cherished'. This means that the staff team is highly committed to the school and have high expectations of themselves, other adults and pupils. This leads to staff undertaking additional training and qualifications with enthusiasm which benefits and enriches the school as well as doing 'over and above' on a regular basis.

Governors have addressed the issues raised in the previous denominational report and they have a very good understanding of the school as a church school. There is a detailed development plan in place to ensure that the Christian aspects of the school are regularly reviewed and updated. They ensure that RE and collective worship is well led and managed, and that statutory requirements are met. Staff recruitment carefully takes into account the needs of the school as a church school. Members of the senior leadership team are fully included in monitoring and evaluating the school as a church school. This means that planning for the future leadership of the school as a church school is being very well addressed. There are a number of ways in which effective partnerships contribute to the strength of this church school, including with the Diocese, with the local community and with other local schools. In particular, there is a very strong, mutually beneficial and supportive partnership with the local churches. The local Church of England, Methodist and United Reform ministers lead worship in the school. The local Anglican vicar is a regular presence in school providing practical and pastoral support. School leaders and staff in this school are the successful 'embodiment of a living Christian faith'. One teacher summarised the outcome of this by saying that they succeed by 'sending out 31 good people into the world' at the end of year 6.

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