

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### Highfield Church of England Primary School

Hawthorne Road, Highfield, Southampton. SO17 1PX

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Winchester</b>
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of inspection	2 July 2018
Date of last inspection	10 June 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 116395
Headteacher of school	Allan King
Inspector's name and number	Lorraine Pugh 819

#### School Context

Highfield Church of England Primary is a split site school located in the city of Southampton. The two sites are approximately half a mile apart. In 2007 it was judged by OFSTED to be an outstanding school. 313 children are currently on roll and they are taught in 11 usually mixed aged classes. Highfield is an oversubscribed school with a long-standing high reputation in the local community. The number of children receiving the Pupil Premium grant for disadvantage is below the national average. The number of children with diagnosed special educational needs is also below the national average. The majority of children are from white British backgrounds, however, approximately two fifths of children are from other ethnic groups with some having English as an additional language to that spoken at home. The headteacher has been in post for twelve years.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Highfield primary as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- Core Christian values are deeply embedded into all aspects of school life and they are known and followed by all members of the school community.
- The inspirational and caring leadership of the headteacher, strongly supported by the RE leader and school Chaplain, enable children to achieve well within a highly effective Christian environment.
- The school's teaching about Christianity in collective worship and religious education (RE) makes a significant impact on its Christian character.

#### Areas to improve

- The school needs to continue integrating and embedding the new Understanding Christianity resource materials into Religious Education (RE) teaching. This will include appropriate adaptations of the existing RE assessment systems.
- The school needs to continue its development of child led worship, to increase children's role in planning, monitoring and evaluating worship provision.

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

Highfield is an outstanding church school because its carefully chosen core Christian values of Love, Serve and Trust strongly underpin all aspects of its work. These values are explicit, well established and thoroughly understood by children and other stakeholders. This is because they are constantly re-enforced and referred to throughout the school day. These core values are taught to children from the very beginning of their time at Highfield, successfully raising their feelings of self-worth and desire to be the best they can be. The school sees every child as unique in the eyes of God, each child having their own individual special qualities that the school will nurture and celebrate, with no child left behind. Adults in the school strive to make children's time at Highfield an enjoyable experience where learning is fun. They aim to foster a natural curiosity within the children's desire to learn. This is achieved by a carefully planned curriculum that includes a wide range of memorable experiences and the school's distinctively Christian ethos is clearly evident in this approach to the education of its children. For example, involvement in the Southampton Rock Challenge activity, where Highfield's children achieved first place among other local schools. Their drama entry on the theme, 'Alone on the wide, wide sea,' was described as a spiritual representation of how love can overcome separation by time and distance. Children are not fearful of challenge in their academic work and this has resulted in consistently high academic standards across the school. The school has been re-accredited with the NACE challenge award for challenging all children, including the most able pupils. Children achieve above national age expectations with children making significant progress from their individual starting points. When necessary, highly individualised intervention is given to support their learning and behaviour. This impacts positively on the school's children and families, allowing them to become valued members of the school's community. Parents speak very highly of the school's on-going support for families when difficult situations arise, saying that the care given to their children has always been unwavering. Children's behaviour throughout the school is exemplary, with politeness and respect clearly evident, both inside and outside of the classrooms. The school's Christian ethos prioritises supportive relationships between adults and children and this equips children with the necessary skills to nurture and maintain their own positive relationships. They understand that showing forgiveness when maintaining friendships is not always easy and you have to work at it. Spiritual development and opportunities for reflection successfully support children's awareness of themselves, others and the world around them. Teachers plan spiritual curriculum encounters and also recognise spiritual moments that may occur throughout the school day, with time given for reflection. Children have an understanding of other cultures and faiths and are able to explain the importance of each faith to those that follow them. They say it is important to treat everybody with respect, regardless of difference, saying that they have friends close to them who follow faiths other than Christianity. Religious education (RE) provision is significant in shaping the school's Christian ethos. The passionate and skilled RE leader ensures standards are at least in line with other core subjects and this is evident in the high quality of children's work. Christian service is important to the children and they are able to explain why we should help other people in the world through charity. Children have recently written letters to the residents of the local care home and they are involved with local and international charities. They can explain why service to others is important and that you should help somebody without expecting something back.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.**

Collective worship is an important time of the school day, clearly reflecting Highfield's Christian character. Each of the Christian values has a focus and this successfully supports children's understanding of how values relate to daily life. Weekly 'Value' certificates are awarded to children whose behaviour has been shown to be an example of the school's values. Their names are also published in the weekly newsletter which they say makes them feel very proud. The value of worship is shown by the school's commitment to the weekly whole school worship held in the church, despite the logistics involved of walking the older children to the church. Parents say that they value this time to share worship with their children. Biblical stories and references, linked to values, allow children to define them as Christian. A detailed programme of Bible story themes, 'Story Seeds', ensures that the messages within each story are emphasised in a way to impact on the future behaviour of the children. For example, children can explain, 'David was brave and able to stand up to bullies.' Children describe worship as a special time in the day when you learn about the good work of Jesus. They are supported to take their faith learning further if they want to and this is shown by the beautiful singing of the child initiated 'Spiritual Band' who have written their own songs to perform in worship. Teachers also involve themselves in the Christian work of the school. For example, their fund raising, through participation in the Romsey Relay Marathon, after a visit from the Bishop of Goma. Careful planning and a range of worship leaders make worship an engaging and enjoyable experience. The school Chaplain regularly leads worship and she also organises the popular fortnightly 'Godstuff' activity. Worship is inclusive with adults making attendance possible for children who may find this a difficult part of the school day. The school uses the church building for special festival services as well as the regular Thursday worship. Anglican traditions are used in worship and children are able to explain their significance, for example, lighting the candle to show the presence of God. Prayer forms an important part of worship with children invited to share their own personal prayers with

others if they want to. Children say they like to create their own personal prayers, and this is clearly showing the importance of prayer in their lives. Children enjoy the opportunities they have to research, plan and lead worship and this is continuing to develop. There is also capacity for children to have an increased role in monitoring and evaluating worship. A range of worship leaders allow the children to experience a wide range of worship styles. There are effective systems in place for adult worship leaders to plan, monitor and evaluate worship.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding.**

The religious education (RE) curriculum is exciting, engaging and challenging and this is the result of careful planning for effective provision that impacts on the children's learning. Assessment systems shows standards to be at least as high as those in core subjects with RE significantly impacting on the shaping the school's Christian character. The RE curriculum is planned using the Hampshire agreed syllabus, 'Living Difference', and the newly introduced 'Understanding Christianity' resource. These have been chosen after careful thought, with trials of the materials taking place before final decisions on their adoption being made. Professional development has supported staff in their RE subject knowledge and teaching. Independent ideas, care and pride are seen in the RE books. RE is developing children's deeper thinking and teachers are skilful in their searching questioning to encourage this. For example, in a lesson where children explored the miracles that Jesus performed. They would like him to perform a modern day miracle where people's hearts are changed to keep peace, stop pollution and global warming. They feel this would make life better for all species on the planet. Children are able to discuss issues that have a wide variety of possible responses and through this work they are developing skills in appreciating and articulating both sides of key questions. Children explain, 'I would say in discussion I respect your opinion but I don't agree.' The core Christian values are referred to, as they become apparent within learning activities, demonstrating their integral role in all aspects of the school's work. Children study other faiths and are able to discuss their key features as well as similarities and differences to Christianity. Children have a clear understanding of the importance of each faith to those who believe in them and they explain why respect and celebration of difference is important. All members of staff acquire the necessary skills and confidence for delivering high quality RE through regular monitoring by the RE leader and professional development to support its teaching. Governors have a strong presence within the school and undertake their own regular monitoring of RE. This information informs the governors when challenging the school leadership regarding RE teaching and learning.

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

The vision, ethos and ambition of school leaders are clearly rooted in distinctively Christian values and this has been pivotal in the school's success and popularity. School leaders are ambitious for the children within Highfield school and they constantly seek opportunities to strengthen the impact of the school's Christian vision. Supportive and challenging collaboration with other schools, the Headteacher's involvement with external religious education organisations and rigorous monitoring have resulted in Highfield's continued development as a highly effective church school where children thrive both academically and socially. The development points from the previous inspection have been addressed. A strong leadership team and experienced school governors support the work of the highly committed headteacher. They ensure that children and staff are central to all school decisions and policies. This has resulted in a vibrant, caring school where everybody is valued. The importance of the school's Christian values and ethos is made explicit to every staff member and this forms an important part of recruitment processes. Efficient systems are in place for leaders to monitor the effectiveness of RE, worship and Christian distinctiveness. This information guides the school's further development as a Christian school. The RE and worship leaders clearly articulate how they continue to develop RE and worship and also describe the impact of past actions. The school's leaders, governors, and clergy meet regularly to evaluate and develop the effectiveness of the school and monitoring visit reports illustrate the robustness of discussions and resulting actions for improvement. The Church and school work very closely together with many shared activities and news of the school is communicated to the wider church community. Parents praise the school for the way it nurtures and cares for their children. Some parents exercise their right to withdraw their children from collective worship for faith reasons. School leaders hold discussions with these parents to ensure their full understanding of the school's collective worship provision whilst respecting parents' reasons for wanting to withdraw their children. Some parents, who follow faiths other than Christianity, say they value the Christian teaching of the school and the importance the school places on all cultures and beliefs. They value the time school leaders give to discuss worship within a community of differing faiths with them. Meaningful activities are arranged for those children not attending worship. The statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met.

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