

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

### Pewley Down Church of England (VA) Infant School

Semaphore Road, Guildford, Surrey, GUI 3PT

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Guildford</b>
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Surrey
Name of federation	Holy Trinity Pewley Down
Date of inspection	29 September 2017
Date of last inspection	11 September 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Infant 136755
Executive Headteacher	Clare Brunet
Inspector's name and number	Marcia Headon 761

#### School context

Pewley Down Infant School is an average size infant school of 180 pupils in the centre of Guildford. It is part of a hard federation with Holy Trinity Junior School. Both schools share the same governing body, executive headteacher and senior leadership team. Many pupils are of white British heritage but nearly a third speak English as an additional language. The proportion who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs/disabilities is below the national average. Since the previous inspection a new executive headteacher has been appointed and the teacher with responsibility for religious education has changed.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Pewley Down as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The highly-developed Christian vision and values give purpose and meaning to the school community and enrich the experience of the pupils.
- The extensive partnerships with the church and wider community enhance learning of all within the school.
- The opportunities for pupils to reflect and to share 'heaven in a moment' make an exceptional contribution to pupils' spiritual development.

#### Areas to improve

- Extend the use of assessment in religious education (RE) by comparing work with other schools so that there is a greater assurance of the accuracy of the judgements made.
- Ensure that pupils develop a greater understanding of other world faiths and can more easily make comparisons with Christianity.

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

Explicitly Christian values are totally central to the life of the school and drive its every action. There is a deep-rooted belief in the values and because of this they are incorporated into all learning. There is a huge 'zest for learning and love of life' which is apparent through the curriculum and through the response of the pupils to their work, to one another and to their teachers. The values guide pupils' thinking and actions. They feel entirely secure, loved and confident in school and explain that even if you make a mistake it does not matter as you will be forgiven as God forgives everyone. They have a firm belief that each individual person has special talents and they are generous in highlighting who is particularly good at some things. The pupils consider it their duty to help one another when they feel sad or in difficulty and to help other people in the world. Behaviour is excellent. The pupils' moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Teachers not only plan for the 'heaven in a moment' which allows pupils to develop spiritually, but they also seize opportunities as they arise, making the curriculum creative and inspiring. Because of this attendance is very high. The 'wildplace' garden and 'fluffy days' are used to encourage pupils to ask big questions and to think for themselves. As one parent said, 'the values and the curriculum allow pupils to develop their own views and faith'. However, although pupils show some knowledge of other faiths, their understanding that Christians do not only live in Britain is less well developed. Relationships within the school are very strong and trusting and staff speak warmly of the Christian love which the headteacher shows to them. Pupils know that their own views will be listened to with respect. The home-school link worker provides valuable support to families. A very effective buddy system helps pupils make a smooth transition to the federated junior school. A special feature is when Year 5 pupils present Year 2 pupils with Bibles and half way through the holidays send the incoming pupils a postcard of encouragement. Pewley Down is a happy and highly inclusive school in which those of all faiths and none are welcomed equally. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are given extra help so they quickly become fluent. Pupils attain highly because of the attention which is given to learning and the belief that all must be nurtured as children of God. Pupils make good progress in their learning which is carefully monitored. Those who need extra help receive it but they are also made to feel special as they go to the 'Star' Room. As a result, outcomes at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, in the Year 1 phonics test and at the end of key stage 1 are above national averages for all groups of pupils. Religious education (RE) makes a huge contribution to the Christian character of the school. Units of work are linked with the values and this helps to enhance the spiritual development of pupils.

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

Assembly and thoughtful time, which make up collective worship, are valued highly by the pupils as a time to sit still, think about and talk to God and to listen to interesting stories 'which tell us how to act'. They are joyous occasions and the messages often leave a lasting impression on the pupils. They vividly recall stories from the Bible and their meaning, the 'fictional' Doris and Douglas visitors talking about their life or 'Christiana' acting out Pilgrim's Progress. Themes are very carefully planned over a four-year cycle to include stories from the Old and New Testament and to allow pupils to explore different ways of responding to God. The themes for collective worship are explored from a different perspective over the course of a week with thoughtful time allowing pupils to reflect more deeply upon the theme. The quality of these reflections is evident as in a Reception class, in response to the teacher exploring where God might be found, one reply was that He could be found in drains as well as in our hearts. A particularly significant feature is when teachers read some of these reflections in Friday assembly. Pupils help with the lighting of the candle, which is developing their awareness of the Trinity and which signifies the beginning of assembly. They often participate in acting out stories in assembly and join in singing with enthusiasm. However, there is still more scope for their greater involvement in leading worship. The school celebrates the major festivals and the 'pause day', run by five different churches has helped to increase pupils' understanding of the significance of Easter. Christmas and harvest are also times of special celebration, often held in local churches. Clergy from different Anglican traditions play an important role in regularly leading assembly and showing pupils there is more than one way in which to worship. Pupils especially like hearing from the Rector and the curate. Assembly is regularly evaluated and pupils' comments are sought as part of regular class discussions and 'time for tea' with the headteacher. As a result, improvements are made. Prayer is very central to the life of the school and the approach taken increases pupils' spiritual development. Pupils are taught how to pray and are encouraged to think about the real meaning and purpose of prayer. In thoughtful time they write prayers and assembly always includes a time for prayer. Pupils spontaneously write or say prayers as, for example on a walk back from the 'wildplace', Reception pupils came across a dead mouse and said a prayer.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Pupils attain well in RE and clearly enjoy the subject. They make strong progress from their starting points and termly checks on progress ensures that pupils who find learning more difficult are given additional support. The vast majority of pupils make progress which is at least in line with other subjects. Assessment is developing but currently the school does not moderate its judgements with other schools. This means there is less certainty over comparisons especially for pupils who achieve 'at greater depth'. The school sets high expectations in RE and the work in pupils' books shows they take pride in their work. The units of the agreed Guildford Diocesan Guidelines for RE have been carefully mapped against the school's values and help to develop pupils' sense of identity, empathy, compassion and hope in a troubled world. Teaching is at least good and at times outstanding. Lessons are well planned. Teachers help pupils to acquire specific skills and concepts that supports their learning in RE well. In lessons they ask challenging questions which ensures pupils not only know about the religion which they are studying but how it can be applied to their own lives. Pupils display a good knowledge of the Bible and can explain the hidden meaning of many parables and how this applies to them. Their understanding of the context of the story of the Good Samaritan was particularly impressive. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils were asked to consider how the story of Jacob and Esau could guide them in their relationships with their own brothers and sisters. They listened attentively as the story was acted out through Godly play and then worked on a variety of interesting and appropriate activities which enhanced their understanding of the story. Children's knowledge of other world faiths is less well developed. The RE leader has only recently taken over responsibility for the work. She has good subject knowledge and expresses a clear view of how she wishes the subject to develop. She is working in partnership with the RE leader at the junior school and will monitor the work in the infant school. RE is well resourced and makes a valuable contribution to the Christian distinctiveness of the school.

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

The headteacher has an exceptionally well thought-through vision and commitment to the school and provides outstanding leadership. Her vision is strongly rooted in Christian theology of living life in its fulness and based on her own deeply spiritual belief in the uniqueness of each child who is valued and treasured and constantly receives the experience of God's love. Her staff, all of whom she respects and values highly, support her Christian mission strongly and as a result the curriculum is exceptionally well planned and the well-being of every child is at the forefront of all school developments. Teachers are very well supported in developing their understanding and leadership skills. The Rector contributes to this by supporting those teachers whose understanding of the Christian faith is less detailed. Their leading of class worship is helped with specially prepared resources. Teachers attend Diocesan courses on leadership development. The school's involvement in European and world-wide projects also enhances teachers' understanding. School leaders know the strengths of the school well. Their evaluation of its effectiveness and distinctiveness as a church school is entirely realistic. They have clear plans for the areas which they wish to develop. The governing body is totally committed to the school and works assiduously on its behalf. It takes its responsibilities for evaluating the work of the school seriously. An experienced governor monitors Christian distinctiveness very fully. He visits classes and assembly and writes comprehensive reports which are very informative, helpful and accurate. Other governors are regular visitors and the governing body contributes hugely to setting the strategic direction, ensuring there is challenge but also support for the school, and in seeking ways to enhance the Christian ethos of the school. The breadth and depth of partnership working is a very remarkable feature of this outstanding school. It is outward looking and seeks every opportunity to enhance the lives of the pupils and staff by building networks. The connection with Holy Trinity Church is very strong and goes far beyond the regular attendance of the Rector and curate in school or visits by the school to this and St Mary's Church. The Parochial Church council is kept fully abreast of events at school and funded the board which prominently displays the school's values. Links with the local community are well developed and parents and volunteers provide support. The relationship with the Diocese is well established and the recent Radio 4 broadcast which featured the school values, shows the esteem with which it is held. Parents are entirely supportive of the school. They describe it as welcoming, and a school where teachers impart joy and passion. One wrote, 'we have experienced first-hand the positive impact the school has had on our daughters' lives through the school's unique way of teaching and the Christian values it imparts'.

The school meets statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.