

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Ide Hill Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Ide Hill
Sevenoaks
Kent
TN14 6JT

Previous SIAS grade: Good

Current SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Rochester

Local authority: Kent

Date of inspection: 21st October 2015

Date of last inspection: 16th September 2010

School's unique reference number: 118722

Headteacher: Louisa Hillman

Inspector's name and number: Pamela Draycott 161

School context

Ide Hill is a very small primary school which is proud of its history of Christian service to its village and surrounding area. Staffing has largely changed since the previous denominational inspection. There is a new leadership structure in place. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom the school receives pupil premium funding, due to social disadvantage, are below the national average. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. Around 30% come from families who attend church regularly outside of their involvement with the school. There are strong links with the parish church.

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

- The school's very strong and explicit Christian ethos and values which clearly shape school life, policies and relationships.
- The school, as a Christian community, develops positive attitudes towards learning which supports good academic progress very well.
- The prominence given to the worship programme in supporting the school's Christian ethos and values and the very good spiritual and moral development of pupils.
- The 'Values for Parents' section on the website which provides good support about the school's values using activities and discussion prompts for parents to use at home with their child or children.

Areas to improve

- Increase the rigour and consistency of assessment practice in religious education (RE) in order that all pupils understand the next key steps needed to improve their learning.

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

Ide Hill school is explicit in its commitment to helping pupils to follow the example of Jesus. Its service is encapsulated by its ethos statement, 'enabling each child to grow as God intended'. This was introduced relatively recently but it has reshaped school life and practice in a deep and meaningful way. The school's values of love, respect and responsibility are very clearly expressed in Christian terms and underpinned by biblical examples. Pupils have an embedded understanding of these values and many are able to relate these to life outside of the school. Thus, the school successfully focuses on preparing pupils academically and personally to be loving, respectful and responsible people. Reflecting the school's Christian values one pupil said, 'We all get on well. We love and respect each other.' The school values are effectively shared across the school and local community through, for example, their very clear 'values leaflet'. Pupils enter school with average to high attainment and leave having made good progress. Pupil attainment is consequently high and well above the national average. Across the curriculum, including in RE, pupils are often given choice in their learning activities. This helps to motivate them well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well supported in the curriculum, in worship and through extra-curricular clubs and trips. Pupils respond very well to this provision. Pupils' behaviour is very good and reflects the school's Christian ethos well. In line with its ethos statement, pupils are known as individuals and consequently feel valued, irrespective of their background, ability or aptitude. This is reflected in attendance rates which are high and well above the national average. Behaviour is good and relationships are very strong. Pupils are supportive of each other and speak appreciatively of the care of their teachers towards them. Although in the early stages of implementation, the newly introduced 'growth mindset' programme is already contributing positively to developing pupils' confidence in learning. Pupils appreciate learning about a number of religions in RE seeing it as, 'helping you understand what other people think and believe'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Daily worship is very well planned and delivered, indicating its central importance in school life. There is a strong element of pupil involvement in leading worship which contributes to positive attitudes towards it. 'Leading Lights' are pupils who have responsibility for planning and leading worship. They are also beginning to have more of a role in monitoring and evaluating worship, alongside staff and governors. Pupils and adults understand the importance of worship in contributing to the school's Christian ethos. The worship programme is led by a range of people including senior leaders and visitors. These different perspectives and styles enhance the worship experience. Worship usually takes place in school and is enriched by weekly worship in church for the Friday celebration time. Pupils from the school also regularly take part in Sunday worship there. Christian festivals are appropriately celebrated. There is a clear focus on the person of Jesus and on biblical teaching as part of the worship programme. Prayer and reflection have a central place in school life. This includes pupils leading prayer spontaneously during worship time. It is enhanced further by prayer and reflection areas inside and outside the school building. Pupils speak confidently about prayer being, 'helping to develop a relationship with God'. They know that there are different types of prayer – asking, thanking, praising. They recognise that reflection helps them 'be still and think deeply'. As they progress through school, pupils learn the Lord's Prayer as well as the school prayer. Aspects of the school's values are appropriately developed in worship through various themes, such as joy and trust. These themes are very well extended through the use of Bible quotes linked to them being placed around the school. Pupils and adults have opportunity to reflect upon them and write comments around them using post-it notes. This is extended further by the school providing a 'values at home' section to its newsletter and then available on its website. This gives ideas for parents to help them to extend and respond to questions raised by pupils around the theme being explored in worship. Pupils

have an age appropriate understanding of key aspects of Christian belief such as 'the Trinity' as 'one God but different names' (Year 2 pupil). Aspects of Anglican worship are well expressed through the programme. Worship makes a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. It often leads to discussion around school and at home as well as to action in the form of fund raising for charitable causes.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Very good progress has been made over the past two academic years in addressing issues relating to RE from the previous denominational inspection. RE is now treated as a 'core subject' alongside English, mathematics and science. Teachers have developed more confidence in teaching RE and consequently planning and delivery has improved. The subject is well led and managed. There is an accurate and focused action plan for further improvement guiding development. The introduction of 'Godly play', which uses symbols and objects and encourages pupils to respond to and ask 'I wonder....' questions, has enhanced the learning experience of pupils. However, standards of attainment, whilst at around the national expectation, are lower than attainment in other core subjects. This means that, whilst most pupils make satisfactory progress in RE, their pace of learning is not as good as in other core subjects. Teacher marking and assessment of pupils' work is happening regularly, in line with whole school policy. However, assessment is not consistently clear in terms of what pupils need to know, understand and do in order to improve their work. In line with the diocesan scheme of work, there is a good balance between learning about Christianity and learning about other faiths. Pupils respond well to opportunities within RE to apply their learning to situations in the world today. There are appropriate links made between RE, worship and the creative curriculum whilst maintaining separate RE lessons.

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

The headteacher, very well supported by the previous RE subject leader, has reinvigorated the school's Christian ethos and values making them much more explicit. This has been achieved through a consultation process with all stakeholders. Consequently, there is a wide-ranging commitment to implementing and living by the school's Christian ethos and values. Key issues from the previous inspection have been address. However, the good progress on these issues has only been made over the past two academic years. Governors know the school well and are now appropriately involved in monitoring and evaluating it as a church school. Leaders, including governors, have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. This means that its self-evaluation and strategic improvement planning for itself as a Church school is developing accurately. RE and worship meet statutory requirements for the voluntary aided sector. The RE link governor is active in her support of these important areas of school life. Links with the parish church and other Anglican churches in the area are strong. Parents are appropriately involved in their children's education and are very supportive of the school as a church school. Diocesan training has been attended by both staff and governors. Issues raised through this training have been put into practice in school life very well. New staff are well inducted into working in a church school. The school is actively involved in links with other local Church of England primary schools in the locality. This is supporting well the school's Christian distinctiveness as well as helping with areas such as moderating examples of pupils' work.

Ide Hill C of E (VA) Primary School, Ide Hill, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN14 6JT