

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Shorne Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Cob Drive, Shorne, Kent, DA12 3DU	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Rochester
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of academy conversion	1 December 2014
Name of multi-academy trust	Aletheia Anglican Academies Trust
Dates of inspection	7 February 2018
Date of last inspection	January 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Academy Converter - Voluntary Controlled equivalent - 141578
Executive Headteacher	Sue Tunnicliffe
Head of School	Tara Hewett
Inspector's name and number	Pamela Draycott (161)

School context

This smaller than average primary school serves pupils living in and around the village of Shorne in north Kent. The majority of pupils are White British. The percentage with a special educational need or disability (SEND) is below the national average. The percentage for whom the school receives extra funding due to social or economic disadvantage is also below the national average. Since the previous denominational inspection the school has become part of a multi-academy trust and there have been significant staffing changes. There are continuing and strong links with the parish church.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Shorne Voluntary Controlled Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- An effective partnership between the executive headteacher and head of school, well supported by governors and the Trust leads to accurate self-evaluation and effective action planning to support further developments.
- Improvements in attainment and progress are in evidence, based on the school's Christian values and recognising the God-given talents of pupils. Considerate relationships and excellent behaviour express the school's Christian underpinning well and contribute effectively to the positive climate for learning in evidence.
- A strong partnership with St Peter and St Paul parish church makes a substantial contribution to the school's Christian character and to its involvement in village life.
- Religious education (RE) and the worship programme express well the school's Christian vision and impact positively on pupils' good spiritual and moral development.

Areas to improve

- In order to refine practice and as part of the planned cycle of development ensure that the school's understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development within its Christian context is reviewed and necessary changes implemented.
- Embed the new focus of 'Understanding Christianity' linked to the Locally Agreed Syllabus for RE, ensuring appropriate assessment practice enables progress in RE to be compared with that of achievement in other curriculum areas.

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

The school's motto is 'Growing together in learning and faith'. This aptly reflects its Christian foundation as it underpins its curriculum and extra-curricular provision, through which pupils develop increasingly well academically and personally. Its values of, 'respect through love, achievement through learning and perseverance through faith', are well known by both staff and pupils. They have a positive impact on school life. They are appropriately linked to biblical teaching, with at its heart 'Psalm 86 verse 11, 'Teach us your way, O Lord'. This underpinning is well extended through a recognition of the uniqueness, worth and God-given talents of the individual. These values influence the school's strong 'family feel', which pupils respond to well. A consistent approach to behaviour management, which makes close reference to the school values, contributes well to the excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning in classrooms and around the site. Relevant display, including relating specifically to the school's Christian ethos and to the celebration of pupils' achievements, is effective. It enhances the learning environment well and makes the school a pleasant place in which to learn and work. Staff know their pupils well, and in keeping with its Christian values, there are good short and longer term interventions in place to support pupils' academic and personal growth. In the period following the previous denominational inspection standards of attainment and progress declined significantly to below the national average. However, focused leadership, in the school and drawing well on the Trust, has brought about a consistency of approaches to teaching and learning. This is impacting very positively on raising attainment. This means that overall, attainment is now broadly at the national average. The attainment and progress of socially or economically disadvantaged pupils is at least as good as their classmates and is better than their peers nationally. There remains a small gap in the attainment and progress of SEND pupils when compared with their peers. The school recognises this and has clear and supportive measures in place which are impacting on narrowing this gap further. The trend in attainment and progress, based on past performance and current, moderated, in house data, shows it continues upward. Strong pastoral systems are in place, including, for example, the targeted use of play therapy. Pupils are aware that their Christian values impact on the decisions they make and their actions towards others. As one Year 3 pupil said, 'Respecting others, like Jesus did, is important. Without it you can't be a good friend'. Whilst a Year 5 pupil reflected, 'Believing in God and in yourself helps you to overcome difficulties'. On those few occasions where behaviour or attendance gets in the way of learning the school has effective and supportive systems in place to bring about successful resolution. This is based on Christian principles such as forgiveness and justice. It means that attendance has improved significantly. It is now at the national average and is on an upward trend. There have been no permanent or fixed term exclusions. As an expression of its Christian foundation, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) is given a high priority and is responded to very well by pupils. Opportunities are appropriately taken for example, in RE, topic work and personal, social and health education (PHSE), music and literacy. Such provision is well extended through, special focus weeks, including a multi-faith week held bi-annually. The worship programme and other prayer and reflection opportunities enhance SMSC further. As part of its ongoing cycle of development the school has a draft SMSC policy. This gives a clear and deepened focus to the school's understanding of what the different elements of SMSC are but is yet to be embedded across school practice. Pupils are developing their confidence in and ability to express their thoughts and beliefs clearly. They have a good recognition of how people are different and yet the same and of the need to, 'show respect through love' to everyone. RE makes an effective contribution to this through its appropriate balance of teaching focused on Christianity and that which addresses other world faiths. RE and worship both contribute to and enhance the school's Christian ethos well.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The worship programme sustains and promotes the school's Christian foundation well. The programme is appropriately planned, allowing the school community to address its values and reflect on key Christian festivals and beliefs well. A variety of leaders, including senior leaders, the incumbent, staff and pupils engages the community well during worship. The Bible is appropriately used so that pupils develop an understanding of its importance for Christians. Key Christian beliefs, such as that of the importance of God as Trinity and the centrality of Jesus are well explored. Consequently, pupils have a good, age-appropriate appreciation of the Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is enhanced further through work in RE. They also develop their knowledge, understanding and reflection skills through engaging in various elements of Anglican styles of worship. This includes the Eucharist, attending church for worship during school time at festivals and through attendance with their family at the monthly 'all-age' Sunday service. At these services pupils from a particular year group play a key role in leading. Pupils and staff engage appropriately with the worship programme and recognise its relevance to their school and for some to their own lives. 'One of the things that makes our school a church school is worship,' as a Year 6 pupil reflected. Opportunity for prayer is given on a daily basis in the act of worship as well as before lunch and at the end of the school day. Prayer and reflection areas are in each classroom and these are well used by pupils. There is a school prayer, written a few years ago by a Year 6 pupil, which is said regularly. It places the work of the school firmly within reliance upon God. The Lord's Prayer is said regularly and its importance to school life

evident. Recently, pupils have been learning to sign the prayer. The pupil faith leaders, who are in Years 5 and 6, are closely involved in leading and evaluating the worship programme. Each faith leader is attached to a class and leads them in and out of worship holding a battery lit candle. They are committed to their role and encourage other pupil involvement in leading and evaluating worship well. Pupil involvement in leading, monitoring and evaluating this dimension of school life is a clear improvement in practice since at the time of the previous denominational inspection. Pupil and staff comments are well taken into account when reviewing the programme and refinements are made in the light of these. Formal monitoring by the head of school and link governor for worship takes place twice yearly, any recommendations are likewise fed into future improvements.

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

The school's Christian ethos is well in evidence in underpinning the setting of its priorities for school improvement and development. This is the case with regard to showing 'respect through love' in relationships and behaviour and when hard decisions have to be taken. It is reflected in the strong focus on improving the academic outcomes of pupils, so that they 'achieve through learning'. It is seen in 'persevering through faith' in the way in which staff at all levels engage positively with pupils, especially those facing difficulties of one sort or another. The school's journey since the time of the previous denominational inspection has not been an easy one. Significant changes to staffing and to the governing body as well as becoming a founding member of the Trust has been well managed. Definite improvements are firmly in place. Through this period of change one staff member said that the school's Christian ethos has 'been its anchor'. Leaders, including governors know their school well and this leads to accurate self-evaluation and clear action plans for continued improvement. Staff are well aware of the school's Christian foundation which is well supported through regular in-service training and professional development. Through work with Trust schools potential leaders are well supported. Governors have secured good leadership and management of the worship programme and RE and both areas meet statutory requirements. Most recently a focus on using an enquiry led approach to teaching Christianity called, 'Understanding Christianity' has been introduced. It is well linked to the requirements of the Kent Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education, following diocesan advice. It is providing fitting stimulus for development and improved engagement in RE. However, it is not fully embedded in school practice. Assessment in RE is following a different system than in other subject areas. This makes it difficult to compare attainment and progress in RE with that of other subjects across the school. Parents are appropriately informed of their children's attainment and progress and are largely supportive of the way in which the school's Christian ethos underpins school life and of the school's leadership. They see how its values impact on their children both in and out of school. There are longstanding, strong and mutually supportive links with the parish church of St Peter and St Paul, which is clearly recognised by staff, pupils and parents as 'our church'. The incumbent leads worship in school regularly and is a governor. His involvement is appreciated and clearly impacts on the school's understanding of itself as a church school. Links with the Diocese of Rochester are good through for example, the involvement of the subject leader in regular RE meetings.

SIAMS report (February 2018) Shorne CE Primary School, Kent, DA12 3DU