

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Snodland Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School

Roberts Road, Snodland, Kent ME6 5HL	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Rochester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Kent
Date of inspection	25 April 2018
Date of last inspection	March 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 118846
Headteacher	Holley Hunt
Inspector's name and number	Anne Southgate 820

School context

Snodland is a larger than the average sized primary school with around 380 pupils. Most pupils are from White British families who live in and around Snodland. A much smaller proportion of pupils than is the case nationally speak English as an additional language (EAL). More pupils than the national average are eligible for free school meals.

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

- Snodland is a deeply Christian school in which all pupils can flourish and live life to the full.
- A very clear Christian vision drives improvement.
- Teachers are supported exceptionally well in their understanding of what it means to work in a church school. This means that they develop rapidly as church school leaders.
- Each pupil is known as a unique individual, so that their needs can be fully met.
- The school community is highly reflective, so that there is an impressive respect for differing views.
- The leadership of religious education (RE) is strong. This results in pupils achieving high standards in RE.
- Collective worship underpins the very respectful and caring behaviour and attitudes in the school.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that the language of all policies makes their Christian basis clear, so that everyone understands this.
- Make explicit the connection between the new learning keys and Christian values. This will help pupils to deepen their understanding that their learning is driven by Christian teaching.
- Widen the monitoring of collective worship so that all pupils are able to contribute their views.

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

Snodland has a deeply Christian character, which underpins daily life at the school. There is a very clear Christian vision, 'living life to the full to the glory of God'. This is accompanied by the Christian values of faith, hope, love, joy, unity and peace. These values and the vision drive the approaches to behaviour, attitudes, wellbeing and relationships, and to learning. For example, school rules are explicitly based on the Christian values. As a result, everyone in the school uses the values as a natural guide to their daily lives. Behaviour is exceptional. The foundation of the values on Christian teaching is well-known by pupils. They can cite a variety of biblical stories, in order to illustrate each value. One pupil explained that Jesus showed love by washing the disciples' feet, by dying on the cross and by healing the paralysed man. Pupils, therefore, have a deep understanding of the Christian roots of the values, which drive school life. Pupils feel safe because of the all-pervasive emphasis on Christian values. A Year 3 pupil commented that they felt safe 'not just physically, but in our minds too, as God protects us'. Consequently, pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is high. Adults know each individual pupil and their needs very well. This enables them to cater exceptionally well for diverse needs and it allows pupils to flourish. Pupils learn very well. Standards are at or above national averages and pupils, including the most vulnerable, make good progress. New learning keys, such as perseverance, have been introduced this year. These are not explicitly related to Christian teaching. Therefore, the opportunity to deepen pupils' understanding of how the Christian character impacts on their learning has been missed.

Pupils are helped to reflect throughout the day. This results in highly respectful pupils who are sensitive to the views of others. Reflecting on their work helps pupils to be confident to take risks in their learning. Pupils have designed reflection areas in each classroom. These provide interactive opportunities to reflect and to respond to the questions posed. Pupils make good use of these opportunities and, as a result, they develop very well spiritually. They are confident to offer their own prayers and they often do so. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is outstanding. Pupils show genuine concern for the welfare of those in their school community and for those in the wider world. This is supported by the way in which they are encouraged to value each person as a creation of God. All talents are valued, for instance by the very wide range of clubs offered. There are regular events, which help pupils to understand diversity in the world. Examples include the multi-cultural art week, and experiencing the ways in which Christian festivals are celebrated in other countries. This is supported by learning in RE, which pupils find both exciting and challenging.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The school community embodies its Christian value of unity by placing importance on gathering each day for worship. This often includes non-teaching staff and parents, as well as pupils and teachers. Acts of worship set the tone for the day. They remind the community of their common Christian purpose to live life to the full. Pupils take questions and thoughts from worship back to class where they reflect on them together. Pupils appreciate this as it allows more of them to express their views. It also means that they have time to consider the relevance of the message for their own lives and to offer prayers. The prayers that pupils write in class are often used in collective worship. Collective worship contributes very well to the respectful and caring attitudes of the pupils. This leads to support for a range of charities, such as MacMillan and the NSPCC. This is because of a genuine concern for the welfare of others. The school has a clear structure for worship, which is distinctively Christian. This includes Anglican traditions, such as lighting a candle and using coloured cloths to reflect the time of the Christian year. Pupils all know the Lord's prayer, which is frequently used in school worship. Plans ensure that pupils experience a quality act of worship every day. These include Bible stories and teaching about the life of Jesus and Christian beliefs. This means that pupils have a developed understanding of key Christian beliefs for their age. For example, they talk with confidence and understanding about God being experienced as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Pupils take a key role in planning and leading worship through groups such as 'leading lights', eco-warriors and anti-bullying ambassadors. Pupils regularly lead acts of worship and this contribution results in high engagement. The local rector leads worship every week and major Christian festivals are celebrated by the school at the church. This includes the 'journey of life', linked to the Pilgrim's Way, and an outdoor act of worship by the river. Thus, pupils experience a wide range of styles of worship. Pupils monitor and evaluate worship regularly. They meet with the worship leader and they have

constructed an action plan to aid further improvement. This is highly effective in securing even better acts of worship. For example, they suggested that pupils should have time in class to reflect on the message of worship. Not all pupils are included in this and more would like to have their voice heard. Pupils appreciate the many opportunities which they have to participate actively and to lead worship. All pupils are involved in class led worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Pupils are enthused by RE as a result of the consistently good and outstanding teaching across the school. Consequently, they attain standards which are often better than those in other core subjects. High achievement is aided by a variety of creative approaches. This means that pupils of all abilities, including those with special needs, can achieve well in RE. Teachers questioning is skilful, as it allows pupils time to think and to reconsider their answers. Responses from pupils are recorded in a wide variety of ways, including through art, drama and on sticky notes by adults. This results in high engagement and very positive attitudes. Older pupils particularly, feel that the new syllabus, including Understanding Christianity, has had a dramatic impact on improving their experience of RE. They enjoy being challenged to think deeply and to understand the beliefs of others. Pupils of all ages are skilled in drawing comparisons between religions and in relating the teaching to their own lives. They are sensitive to the views of others and there is a climate where everyone's opinion is valued.

The RE leaders are dedicated and highly effective. They have introduced a bespoke assessment system, which is very clear and simple to use. This helps both teachers and pupils to plan for high achievement. These leaders, together with senior leaders, offer exceptional support to class teachers. They have provided considerable high quality training and teachers find them approachable. This supports the very good RE teaching in the school and has led to rapid improvement. Leaders monitor teaching and achievement regularly. They are accurate in their assessment and this allows them to target support appropriately. Pupil attainment is tracked carefully so that no pupil falls behind. Pupils are able to comprehend complex ideas and to use religious vocabulary with confidence.

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

Leaders have ensured that the Christian vision for the school is the key driver for daily life and for securing improvement. The vision for all to 'live life to the full' results in high expectations of both pupils and of adults. This means that everyone achieves their best and that all can flourish. All that happens in the school is grounded in the Christian vision, but this is not explicit in all policies. There is no complacency. Leaders at all levels monitor and evaluate rigorously and they produce accurately targeted improvement plans. Succession planning is very strong indeed. From the moment they start working at the school, teachers are helped to understand what it means to be a church school. There are ample opportunities to develop leadership skills, for example by shadowing existing leaders. The headteacher has planned carefully for her maternity leave. She has ensured that senior leaders are fully able to continue developing her vision in her absence. Being a church school is taken very seriously and is given priority. Leaders ensure that teachers have access to a wide range of training, both in and out of school. Much of this is provided by the diocese and is cascaded effectively to all staff. The partnership with local church schools is helpful. This allows leaders to discuss ideas and to share good practice. There is a close relationship with the local church. The rector and assistant minister are experienced in education and they provide high quality support to school leaders. Parents are extremely complimentary about the school. They recognise that their children are known as individuals, and that their particular needs are provided for very well. Families from all backgrounds feel valued because of the very inclusive approach that leaders adopt. There are good relationships with the local community. Pupils deliver harvest parcels and visit residents in the local care home. Leaders have ensured that pupils have a real appreciation of the needs of others.

Governors are knowledgeable and they provide high quality support and challenge to school leaders. They contribute well to robust self-evaluation and to the very clear and helpful improvement plans. The development points from the previous denominational inspection have been fully addressed. Statutory requirements for collective worship and RE are met. Leaders at Snodland have ensured that the school is deeply Christian. As such, it serves its local community exceptionally well.

