

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Tunstall Church of England Voluntary Aided RPrimary School	Tunstall Road, Tunstall Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1YG
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese/Methodist District	Canterbury
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Outstanding
Local authority	Kent
Date of inspection	26 September 2016
Date of last inspection	September 2011
School's unique reference number	118735
Headteacher	Kathryn Hutchings
Inspector's name and number	Pamela Draycott (161)

School context

This popular school is consistently oversubscribed. In September 2015 it began an expansion process by taking in a second foundation stage class. This continues annually until 2021 when each year group will have two classes. In April 2016, the school moved into new purpose-built premises. Most pupils are white British. The percentage with some sort of special educational need or for whom extra funding is received due to social disadvantage are well below the national average. In March 2016 OfSTED judged the school to be outstanding. There are strong links with its parish church of St John the Baptist, Tunstall.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Tunstall Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Effective leadership, based on a clear vision and linked to explicit Christian values, is continuing to drive forward improvement as a church school.
- The school's Christian ethos impacts strongly on pupils' very positive attitudes and exemplary behaviour which in turn strongly influences their high academic attainment and progress.
- The collaborative and committed work of the whole staff team and their support of the school's Christian ethos contributes to it being a happy and caring place with 'children at its heart'.
- During the move to the new school building its Christian foundation has been deeply considered and is very well supported in displays across the school.
- Worship and religious education (RE) support and express the school's Christian foundation deeply.

Areas to improve

- In order to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding ensure that within the RE curriculum appropriate opportunities are taken for exploring the world-wide nature of Christianity in general and Anglicanism in particular.
- Enhance worship further through the use of different colours, linked to Anglican practice, to mark different periods of the Christian year.
- Ensure that the quiet area in the school grounds is enriched by the use of an explicit Christian focus to aid prayer and reflection.

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

The school is a safe, stimulating and happy place where each pupil is well guided and challenged to succeed academically and personally. Academic attainment is consistently higher than both local authority and national averages. A strong teaching and support team work collaboratively and effectively together. This contributes to the school having a detailed knowledge of each pupil and their learning needs which means that their well-being is a priority and that pupils make very good progress as they grow through school. This is clearly and positively linked to the school's embedded Christian foundation which has recently been refined and refreshed. As part of the recent move to the new site the school has refocused around six rather than 12 key values. These are perseverance, friendship, service, truthfulness, forgiveness and kindness. They are expressly and clearly linked to the teachings of Jesus and have a significant impact on individuals and the school community. The values are recognised as being those which 'any person might have but for us they are important because Jesus wants us to live by them', as one Key Stage 2 pupil reflected. There is a strong sense of belonging and relationships are constructive and caring, reflecting Jesus' commandment to 'love one another'. Consequently pupils feel safe in school and are settling in extremely well to their new learning environment. Behaviour is exemplary and attendance is consistently well above the national average. Across the curriculum and through the excellent range of extra-curricular activities pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is explicitly and positively nurtured. Pupils know what is right and wrong and usually act on this knowledge appropriately. 'Being a Church of England school helps us all to know what is good to do and how to treat others. You know that you can ask for forgiveness if you need to.' On those very rare occasions where behaviour is not as good as it should be, clear and fair systems are in place based on the Christian values of justice and forgiveness. Pupils appreciate that RE helps them understand and appreciate both Christianity and other religions represented in Britain today. However, opportunities for pupils to encounter Christianity, and indeed Anglicanism, as a world faith, are limited.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The daily worship programme is varied and great value is placed on its central role in expressing and supporting the school's Christian ethos and in exploring its values. It involves pupils and adults in both planning and leading worship well. Clear monitoring and evaluation processes are in place, which includes pupils and staff as well as senior leaders and governor involvement. Points raised through this evaluative process are used to enhance practice further. Through worship pupils have a wide range of opportunities to recognise the importance of Jesus and of the Bible for Christians. They respond positively to these opportunities and engage deeply in worship which is both inspirational and inclusive. Staff and pupils take an active part in singing and are respectful and engaged during prayer times. Through the worship programme pupils have a basic appreciation of the Christian concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. However, there are some missed opportunities to consistently develop understanding of this belief. Planning for worship is thorough and reflects the importance placed on it by the school. As part of the programme its Christian values are celebrated as are the gifts, talents, attainment and behaviour of individuals and groups within school life. Pupils have a detailed understanding of the rhythm of the Christian year through the celebration of some key Christian festivals. The worship programme has aspects of Anglican practice built into it. For example, lighting a candle to mark the beginning of worship. Pupils know that this represents, 'Jesus as the Light of the World'. The Anglican practice of using different colours to signify different times of the Christian year is not well drawn on through worship in school. Worship is enhanced by the regular involvement of the parish priest as well as visitors from other denominations and Christian groups. Visits to the church for worship at festival times and during Lent enhance provision and are appreciated by the school and church community. Prayer is an important aspect of school life and for many individuals as part of their spiritual journey. Pupils know that prayer is 'talking to God' and that, 'it's important to think about and pray for people who are in need'. Pupils know the Lord's Prayer which is said regularly as part of worship. A prayer book has been a longstanding part of the

school's practice. In this pupils write their own prayers which are read in school worship. Since the move to the new building, prayer and reflection areas in classrooms have also been developed. Pupils are responding to these extremely well. There is a quiet area in the grounds which the school has rightly identified as needing to include Christian symbols and stimulus for reflection in. Initial thinking has gone into this but it has not been actioned as yet. Strong and mutually supportive links are made between worship and the RE curriculum. Whilst being explicitly Christian, the programme is properly inclusive of those from other backgrounds and faiths. Thus it supports spiritual and moral development opportunities well.

The effectiveness of religious education is good

RE is regarded as a 'core subject' and contributes effectively to pupils' spiritual and moral development as well as to their academic attainment and progress. Attainment is above national expectations and comparable with attainment in, for example, literacy. Pupils make good progress. This is because teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Since the previous denominational inspection report an appropriate range of approaches and activities are now provided to help pupils reflect on the significance of religious beliefs and practices for believers and for themselves. These contribute very well to pupils' positive attitudes towards RE which they say is, 'usually enjoyable and you learn a lot in it'. Pupils often relate their learning in RE to 'real life situations, like how you should behave or what you should do in different situations'. RE is taught as a discrete subject and linked with other areas of the curriculum appropriately. There is a good balance of content across the curriculum with a clear emphasis on Christianity as well as other world faiths being appropriately addressed. However, explicit planning to encourage pupils to understand Christianity, and indeed Anglicanism, as a world-wide, multi-cultural faith is under-developed. Teachers plan activities which enable pupils to work individually, in pairs, groups or as a whole class. Group activities are either linked to ability levels or in mixed ability groupings. This variety of approach enhances learning well. Assessment procedures are in place and have been appropriately matched to assessment criteria used in other core subject areas. The subject leader is committed and supportive of colleagues and works well to maintain the high profile the subject has across the school.

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

The strategic and practical leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by senior leaders and governors, is committed to and effective in promoting the school's embedded Christian vision. Thus, since the previous denominational inspection, the school has been successfully led through a period of significant change. Over this period it has effectively balanced drawing on its Christian history whilst refreshing and revitalising its Christian ethos and values taking it into the future. This means that the school's self-evaluation as a church school is accurate with clear steps for improvement identified. Its Christian values lie at the heart of these developments. Areas for improvement from the previous denominational inspection have been well addressed. There are very strong links with the parish church and with other churches locally. Parents are well informed and clearly support and see the benefit to their children of the positive impact of the school's Christian ethos and values. Under the strong and caring leadership of the headteacher, the staff team at all levels works collaboratively together for the good of the pupils in their care. Parents are aware of and appreciate the approachability of staff recognising that they 'go the extra mile'. This is seen as being based on the school's Christian foundation. 'Being linked with the Church is a big part of school life and helps the children learn to appreciate each other'. Since its move the school has begun to make links with its new neighbours. It has started a regular lunch club which is beginning to be established as a positive outreach to its local community. Links with the Diocese are recognised as being important within the school community. The Bishop of Dover opened the school and the school benefits from the range of support offered by the Diocese including school leaders effectively supporting the subject leader for RE so that she can regularly attend training. Worship and RE both meet statutory requirements.

SIAMS report (September 2016) Tunstall CE (VA) Primary School, Tunstall, Kent, ME10 1YG