

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Ewhurst Church of England Voluntary Aided Infant School

Address The Street, Ewhurst, Surrey, GU6 7PX

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Overall grade

Good

The impact of collective worship

Good

The effectiveness of religious education (RE)

Good

School's vision

Inspiring confident learners in God's care.

At Ewhurst Church of England Infant School, our Christian values of friendship, respect, honesty, perseverance, community, and love shine through our provision. Our aim is, through an inspiring and aspirational curriculum, to ensure all pupils develop skills and knowledge, a strong moral code, and a deepening understanding of the Christian faith to prepare them for life as global citizens.

Key findings

- Pupils at Ewhurst are confident learners because the Christian vision and associated values are woven throughout all aspects of school life. God's care is at the heart of Ewhurst. Staff know their pupils well and as a result, pupils flourish academically. However, a shared definition of spirituality is not in place.
- The interim headteacher has rapidly identified key priorities for school improvement which originate from the vision. Leaders are passionate about enabling pupils and adults to flourish. Governors are prioritising sustainable leadership solutions for Ewhurst. Governor's plans for the school's future must be shaped by the Christian vision.
- Leaders ensure that the whole curriculum has rich opportunities for pupils to look beyond themselves while developing an age-appropriate understanding of the exploitation of the natural world. Recently refreshed grounds are well used to support learning and character development, and enable pupils to care for God's creation. Pupils are passionate about the environment and champion a range of good causes.
- Good collective worship coupled with strong links to the parish church, results in pupils having an impressive understanding of Bible stories and the teachings of Jesus. At present, pupils are not routinely involved in planning, leading, or evaluating acts of worship, nor do they have the opportunity to learn more about how to use different worship styles.
- Religious education (RE) is a strength of the school. Effective subject leadership ensures that the RE curriculum reflects the vision and is of a high standard. As a result, all pupils progress well in RE.

Areas for development

- Governors are to ensure that future plans for school leadership and any formal partnerships entered into are shaped by the Christian vision, so that pupils and adults continue to flourish.
- Embed a secure and shared understanding of spirituality, so that greater opportunities for spiritual growth and a shared interpretation of spirituality are harnessed throughout the curriculum.
- Involve pupils regularly in evaluating whole school worship. Broaden their experience of worship, so that they have a wider range of Christian traditions to draw on when planning and leading acts of worship themselves.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

Changes in leadership have not stopped the impact of the school's vision on pupils and adults alike. Everyone at Ewhurst is flourishing. It is a happy and welcoming small school. Interim leaders have swiftly assessed the needs of the school and established action plans that strengthen the school as a Church school. Ewhurst is at the centre of the community. Parents are pleased with the school and the teaching of Christian values is cherished. As one parent said, 'Our children understand perseverance and show this at home as well as in school.' Another parent said, 'It is refreshing to hear about the Christian faith being explored in an inclusive way.' During the pandemic, staff valued the mutual support and the ways in which leaders' decisions and subsequent actions, were rooted in the vision. Strong relationships are key to the school's success.

Governors rightly prioritise the need for a sustainable model of leadership at Ewhurst. Leaders know the school well through monitoring and this enables them to explore potential leadership solutions wisely. Partnerships with the Diocese support this. As governors seek to secure the leadership, they must ensure that the vision and values are shaping the decisions they take to safeguard the flourishing of pupils and adults at Ewhurst.

The behaviour of pupils is exceptional. There are very few incidents of poor behaviour. When they do occur, staff are consistent in their restorative approach that links behavioural choices to the values. Forgiveness and reconciliation are fundamental to the school's approach to behaviour. Pupils feel valued by their teachers and love coming to school. Pupils develop a strong sense of empathy for others, thanks in part to the regular opportunities to explore the big questions of life in lessons and in worship. Staff often ask pupils, 'I wonder how that person is feeling?' Friendship is explored in many ways. Pupils and adults say how friendships for life have grown from their time at the school. This adds to the family community created at Ewhurst.

Everyone is treated with respect and dignity. Policies and procedures are consistently applied, creating a nurturing environment where relationships are strong. The mental health and wellbeing of everyone are prioritised. The well-trained staff ensures that no one is left behind and that individuals who show signs of struggling are swiftly supported. Relationships between home and school are exceptionally strong. Ewhurst is fully inclusive. Any barriers to learning are swiftly broken down and leaders ensure that the most vulnerable pupils are well supported and enjoy school.

Updates to the inspiring curriculum empower teachers to make strong links between learning and vision. Ensuring that pupils develop confidence and independence, is a priority grown from the vision. For example, texts used in English lessons are skillfully linked to developing pupils' writing and understanding of Christian values. Building on pupils' interests, such as ecological projects, is firmly linked to the vision and care for God's world. The curriculum is rich with

opportunities for spiritual growth. However, a shared definition of spirituality and associated language is not in place. Consequently, some planned and spontaneous opportunities for spiritual development are missed. Learning about diverse communities beyond the local area gives pupils a better understanding of cultural differences. For example, RE lessons regularly explore Christianity around the world.

Pupils become advocates for change through a range of charitable projects. Local, national, and international causes are learnt about and supported. Pupils are passionate about helping others and conserving the environment. Forest school is a key component of this and is cherished by pupils, staff, and parents. The community has recently pulled together to regenerate the outdoor spaces, demonstrating a strong sense of community. Projects, such as links with a Ugandan village, inspire pupils to have deep conversations and not to take what they have for granted. This contributes to pupils developing a strong moral compass.

Collective worship is fully inclusive, invitational, and inspiring for pupils and adults. Worship is a rich expression of the vision. The Lord's Prayer is learnt in sign language and images used in worship reflect the diverse nature of Christianity. Festivals are celebrated and explored in exciting ways that pupils love to engage with. Presently, pupils are not involved enough in planning, leading, or evaluating acts of worship. Consequently, opportunities for pupils to be more actively engaged in worship are missed. Worship is entirely led by staff and clergy. Worship gives pupils countless opportunities to learn from Bible stories. As a result, pupils have an impressive knowledge of Bible stories and understand how the parables of Jesus are important in their context. Invitational prayer is central to worship. As one pupil explained, 'Prayer is a time to chat with God. We know He cares for us'. Spaces for worship, reflection, and prayer inside are stimulating and well used. Links with the parish church and Baptist Church are strong. Pupils enjoy playing in the churchyard and attending acts of worship and services in the church, where they are welcomed with open arms. The clergy is excited to be back in school supporting collective worship and the pastoral needs of the whole school community. Whilst pupils have exceptional knowledge of Bible stories, they are not so confident in using language associated with Christian belief in the Holy Trinity.

Pupils flourish in RE. They enjoy challenging lessons and learning about world religions and worldviews. Christianity is seen as a living world faith. The 'Understanding Christianity' resource is effectively supporting staff subject knowledge and shapes pupils' understanding of the Bible. This gives clarity of vision and supports pupils' exploration of theology, philosophy, and human science. As a result, pupils develop age-appropriate skills of inquiry, critical analysis, and interpretation. Training supports staff in delivering good lessons. Work in pupils' books demonstrate the knowledge acquired with effective assessment systems deployed. Pupils enjoy learning about Judaism and Islam as part of RE lessons. They skillfully make comparisons between world religions and value the importance that different faiths have on their followers. The passionate RE leader has put in place a rich curriculum for the pupils. Assessment ensures that teachers know how well pupils are doing in RE. The RE leader shares new initiatives with teachers in regular staff meetings. RE provision meets the RE Statement for Entitlement.

Pupils and adults are enabled to flourish due to the deep-rooted Christian vision that permeates all aspects of this inspiring school. During pupils' three years at Ewhurst, they grow and thrive as confident learners in the knowledge of God's care for each of them.



The effectiveness of RE is

Good

The breadth of curriculum coupled with high quality teaching enables pupils to make good progress in RE lessons. All groups flourish academically in RE, and the subject has a high priority across the school. Teachers utilise diocesan training and support to teach a rich curriculum in RE. Engaging and active learning and assessment approaches, ensure that the impact of learning is long-lasting. Effective monitoring of pupils' work helps to identify good progress.

Contextual information about the school			
Date of inspection	25 May 2022	URN	125181
Date of previous inspection	13 January 2015		
School status	Voluntary aided infant school	NOR	69
Diocese	Guildford		
Interim Headteacher	Chris Elston		
Pupil profile	The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages.		
	The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages.		
Additional significant information	Most pupils are of White British heritage. The school has had interim leaders since September 2021. At the time of the inspection, the interim headteacher had been in post for 11 days. Governors, the local authority, and Diocese are in the process of securing long-term leadership solutions for the school.		
Inspector's name	Toby Long	No.	896