



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Steep Church of England VC Primary School, Petersfield	
Address	95-97 Church Road, Steep, Petersfield, GU32 2DE
School vision	
<p>At Steep every child deserves a great education and a happy childhood. A life in all its fullness-John 10:10. Our school motto 'Believe, Persevere, Achieve' is grounded in our Christian values of: Faith, Perseverance and Wisdom.</p> <p>Faith in our Hearts Perseverance in our Actions Wisdom in our Choices</p> <p>Recognising its historic church foundations, Steep is a Christian school serving the common good for children of all faiths and none. At Steep we are ambitious for all our children and ensure that they enjoy learning, achieve well and flourish.</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school prioritises identifying and meeting the needs of its individual pupils. It is evident that this is due to being a Church school with the priority to bring fullness of life. • Leadership at all levels models the Christian vision in action. This is clearly visible across the work of staff, governors and pupils. • Meaningful and highly valued collective worship supports and enhances pupil and staff spiritual development. • Staff ensure that the dynamic religious education (RE) curriculum is the focus of continual improvement. Reflecting the Christian vision, they work closely together adapting it effectively to be accessible to their pupils. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend pupil confidence in identifying and undertaking a greater range of ways in which they can be agents of change. • Use the vision to fully utilise the potential of the outdoor areas, including the spiritual garden. This is to further enrich the culture of the school and the high priority given to good mental health and wellbeing. 	
Inspection findings	
The Christian vision of Steep Church of England Primary School has every pupil as its focus. It is the	



lens through which it holds itself accountable for all decisions. The biblically based fullness of life it seeks to foster for all pupils and adults, is expressed in providing an educational experience that builds the foundation of a happy childhood. This means pupils are pleased to be in school and relish the opportunities it offers them. Pupils leave this small primary school having grown in confidence, recognising Christian values that can empower them and equipped for the challenges ahead. Staff work alongside them to enable them to face challenges and difficulties. There are numerous examples of the transformational effect the school has had, but each unique to the needs of that young person. Staff recognise that this is a place where they feel privileged to be as they are empowered, trusted and respected.

The distinctive logo of acorns serves as a reminder of the embedded and frequently articulated values. The school community apply the three Christian values of faith, perseverance and wisdom as the bedrock of the others. As a result, pupils use them as their reference point and basis of a moral compass. They refer to them in building strong relationships with others. Sometimes even guiding their own family life and decision making, by referring to the values learnt in school when at home. The long-standing motto, shaped by previous generations, has been revisited and renewed to ensure it serves the community well. The relatively new governing body were challenged through their monitoring work, where they saw the impact of pupils and staff applying the values. Consequently, each governor meeting now begins with an open and honest consideration of a school value and its implications for their role. Governors have found that this has empowered them in their work.

There is a strong, collaborative and cohesive staff team. They strive to shape and mould the curriculum, aiming for it to be accessible and engaging for their pupils. Partnerships with other agencies are important to the school, in its quest to support families. Pupils appreciate that different approaches are needed for them all to learn and graciously accommodate each other's needs. They value their teachers and thrive through the varied learning experiences encountered. Recognising its rural setting, trips, visits and special days are carefully planned. One example is the regular visit to London. Pupils go with their trusted teachers from this small village to a large, multicultural environment. It exemplifies the way the needs of the pupils in their care drive the decisions leaders make. Pupils show great enthusiasm for visits which are made to the local church. It is evident that enjoyment and learning are intertwined in these opportunities.

Building in regular reflection and recognising the importance of spiritual growth is a priority in staff training. Pupils find the spirituality framework used by the school to be easily accessible. Reflective journals show a wide range of ways pupils have been equipped to express their spiritual development. One class built on this approach, using their personal development work to naturally overflow into aspects of RE, using the theme of superheroes. This demonstrated the creative approach the school has in shaping the curriculum, adapting to the needs of different pupils and classes.

Pupils see collective worship as an exciting experience and along with staff, parents and carers, value the many different forms it takes. It is not seen as unusual for pupils to lead others in prayer or take a moment for individual prayer. This often involves them adding a stone, in the colour that represents their prayer focus, into the jar that resides in the central part of the school reception. The reflection areas in each classroom are well cared for, with opportunities to use the prayers written by pupils. The leaders who make up the pupil values council provide advice and feedback to staff, as they explore new approaches together. The school community is further enriched by a mutually beneficial relationship with the local parish church and its congregation. The clergy see it as a privilege to share with and learn from the pupils in their regular worship opportunities with the school. They follow the example set by the school, to strive to find ways to adapt approaches so all can enjoy these times.

Motivated by the vision, pupils and staff show kindness to each other and treat each other well. When things go wrong, time is taken, in a way that is most appropriate for those individuals, to find reconciliation and restoration. Many spaces for quiet and calm are appreciated and well used. The spiritual garden isn't currently fully utilised, with some challenges due to its location. The focus of the vision brings an awareness of the need to prioritise good mental health for all, including staff. Leaders prioritise understanding the pressures colleagues face, and work together to identify and offer possible solutions.

The care pupils receive in school helps motivate them to want to show that same compassion to the world around them. Many individual pupils raise a charitable concern they wish to support by writing a letter to the headteacher, based around an aspect of the Christian values. From this, those pupils are encouraged to share their selected charity with the school in collective worship to raise awareness. Often pupils will go on to complete or lead a fund-raising activity. In a few cases, it has prompted some to want to make a difference in other ways, reflecting a growing emphasis on wanting to change the world for the better. For example, outside of school, some pupils in one family were inspired to litter pick around their area.

This is a school that prioritises high quality religious education. The subject benefits from strong leadership which is informed by the vision. Consequently, pupils access quality resources, a curriculum that is constantly being improved and developed, alongside a well-trained supportive staff team. As pupils move through the school they build on their understanding of theology, philosophy and social sciences, alongside a range of different religions and worldviews.

The open and supportive culture of the school means that it has become the school of preference for many families. This is irrespective of whether they are seeking a Christian foundation or if their views come from a secular perspective. The growth of the individual in a caring Christian community, that seeks to bring fullness of life for all, is 'the Steep way'.

The inspection findings indicate that Steep Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	31 January 2024	URN	116319
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled	Pupils on roll	99
Diocese	Portsmouth;Winchester		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Lou Romans		
Chair	Adrian Conroy		
Inspector	Angela Smith	No.	925