

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Salehurst Church of England Primary School

Vision

Let all that you do be done in love 1 Corinthians 16:14

Salehurst Church of England Primary School is welcoming and inclusive; our Christian ethos ensures that well-being is at the heart of all we do. We strive to provide opportunities that enable us all to flourish and reach our full potential, both as scholars and as people. We foster courage, commitment and curiosity to engage with our world. We help children to build the knowledge, skills and strengths needed for life ahead, equipping them to meet the challenges of today, ready for those of the future.

Salehurst Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

Strengths

- Salehurst primary school lives out its daily life as a nurturing and compassionate community. Its leaders model the love on which the Christian vision is built. Together with the whole school team, they never give up in their efforts to provide the very best for pupils and their families.
- Inclusion lies at the heart of everything that is done in school day by day. This means that, whatever the challenges might be, there is the warmest of welcomes for each child. The work done to fully integrate those who have special needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and support them well is to be commended.
- The school's focus on the wellbeing of pupils, as well as of families and staff, means that children are happy and, therefore, ready to learn. Very positive relationships at all levels contribute to a sense of security and of support.
- There is a dynamic sense of equity amongst pupils, leaders and staff. This is shown in a deep commitment to difference and diversity, and in giving the care needed for each individual. It is sacrificial at times but is always primarily focused on the school's vision and values.

Development Points

- Consolidate the thinking and current practice related to spiritual development to formulate a shared understanding. This is so that its impact can be more readily expressed and understood
- Enhance opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually through their own planning and delivery of collective worship. This is to enrich the breadth of opportunities that adults and pupils have to flourish spiritually together.
- Ensure that the school's approach to curiosity and questioning is fully embedded within the religious education (RE) curriculum. This is so that knowledge and understanding is deepened through small, yet focused, steps of enquiry.



Inspection Findings

The Christian vision of Salehurst primary school is one which encourages adults and pupils to love each other. This is a love based on Christian teaching, which is the foundation of a calm and purposeful community. The staff team meets the daily expectation of school leaders 'to have love and to be a giver'. As a result, there is a warm welcome for pupils and their families, many of whom choose the school for its nurture of the whole child. They see that the adults 'live the values' and that their children can apply them in their everyday lives. A significant investment in good mental health and wellbeing for pupils, families and adults shows love, compassion and respect in practical ways. Staff feel valued, professionally and personally, highlighting the way leaders ensure they are able to reach their full potential. Pupils are happy to be at school because it is 'kind, caring and safe'. School leaders make effective use of partnerships, including the diocese, its federation school and education support services. This means that they get the best possible nurture especially for those who have specific needs. Governors monitor and evaluate their Church school with understanding and aspiration, thus driving improvement

School leaders have designed a curriculum that is fit for purpose in serving the pupils in its particular context. It 'hooks' pupils with cross-curricular questions which spark interest and enthusiasm. By sharing skills and expertise across the federation, staff maximise their strengths as they plan creatively to inspire curiosity. The schools in the federation have also explored how they might include spirituality within the evolving curriculum. This is described by leaders as offering 'moments of the beyond' to pupils in their learning. It is also linked to a love of self, others and God, flowing from the vision. There are early examples of spirituality related to awe and wonder within the curriculum, as pupils explore the world. It is not confidently understood or established in explicit ways.

Collective worship is a time 'to stop and be together as a whole school'. In line with the Christian vision and its associated values of courage, compassion, friendship and respect, it is highly inclusive. For pupils who find it difficult to be still, there are effective strategies in place to enable them to engage and participate. When invited, pupils and adults readily find their 'still, small space' to reflect or to pray. Pupils particularly enjoy focusing on current events in worship and thinking about people who have changed the world. Worship is enriched by pupils' own prayers which they are invited to write in reflection areas and prayer books. However, the impact of pupil voice in directly shaping the spiritual life of the school through worship is underdeveloped. The relationship with the local church is strong and vibrant. One member of the church described their role as 'translating the gift of faith to those who gifted faith to us'. This is shown through offering the church as a community space for many activities, including worship. Parents and carers feel fully included in what is provided, whether or not they have a faith of their own.

Loving inclusion lies at the heart of this school community. This means that its members live very well together, because 'everything that we do in love is for everyone'. School leaders are courageous in their decisions, saying 'We will always try to meet needs'. This can be costly in terms of emotional support and resources, but it is equitable and very effective. The Christian vision and values provide the practical means by which inclusivity is lived out. This is seen in the warm way stakeholders speak of the strength of friendship and 'togetherness'. Pupils have a deep understanding of how to show compassion in the classroom and beyond. They explain how some people need more help than others and how they have contributed to this. Ultimately, the inclusion in the school is based on extremely strong relationships with pupils, their families and within the staff team. For staff, this is because 'we stand by each other' and feel supported very well by their leaders. For parents and carers, there is a very warm welcome that goes 'well beyond' what might be expected. This is combined with a sense that their voice is heard



and acted upon, where possible. In recent weeks, strong relationships have also helped the whole community to uphold each other in the grief of unexpected bereavement.

Within school, a clear sense of justice and responsibility makes a significant contribution to the building of these loving relationships. This often requires love that goes to the 'next level' when behaviour is challenging or not easily understood. It is lived out in ways which accept and respect each person as different and precious. This is particularly apparent in the way in which those who have SEND are integrated into the school. Making SEND practice as good as it can be results in ways of working which benefit all pupils and their families. A carefully crafted behaviour policy is highly effective in supporting pupils to be 'ready, respectful and safe' in school. Pupils understand that they are each responsible for a positive environment for learning and social times. They are also able to extend their understanding of fairness and justice into the wider world, including into the local community. Their litter posters provided reminders about keeping the locality clean and tidy, for example. They are especially proud of their continued link with a school in Malawi. This has helped them to consider how environmental changes mean that lives are affected and how they might help.

The RE leader ensures that the curriculum reflects current thinking in its balance and sequencing. Using support from the diocese, she works with teachers to ensure that learning continues to improve. The curriculum is designed to make pupils curious about the 'big questions' raised by faith and belief. However, the way these are broken down into accessible, smaller questions to deepen pupils' understanding is sometimes less clear. Having a secure grasp of a range of subject-specific vocabulary means that pupils can speak confidently about a range of faith traditions. This means that they are starting to explain how RE will support them in their future lives. They are also able to express their own views in the knowledge that they will often 'respectfully disagree', as one pupil observed. This contributes to the school's positive attitudes to difference and diversity. Pupils demonstrate a sense of pride in their work. A tangible feeling of excitement about this subject is evident throughout the school.

Information

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| Address | George Hill, Robertsbridge, East Sussex TN32 5BU | | |
| Date | 22 November 2024 | URN | 114521 |
| Type of school | Voluntary Controlled | No. of pupils | 172 |
| Diocese | Chichester | | |
| Federation | Bridge Federation | | |
| Headteacher | Elizabeth Avard | | |
| Chair of Governors | Gill Atkinson | | |
| Inspector | Virginia Corbyn | | |