

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Sarisbury Church of England Junior School

Allotment Road, Sarisbury Green, Southampton, SO31 7AP	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Portsmouth
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Hampshire
Date of inspection	7 February 2018
Date of last inspection	26 March 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	VC 116313
Headteacher	Andrew Stockton
Inspector's name and number	Laura Bosworth 928

School context

Sarisbury is an above average-sized school with 369 pupils aged 7–11 years on roll. All pupils live locally and the school is oversubscribed. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is well below the national average and a significant proportion come from relatively privileged economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also well below the national average but is rising. The current incumbent and the headteacher have been in post for well over 10 years and staffing is relatively stable.

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

- Strong senior leaders are well supported by a committed staff team and together they ensure that the life of the school is firmly rooted in a vibrant Christian vision which clearly impacts on the whole school community.
- Relationships across the whole school community are very strong and are a clear demonstration of the school community living out its core Christian values of love, hope and forgiveness.
- Christian teaching clearly underpins the exemplary behaviour and attitudes of pupils.
- The local clergy and a dedicated parish team provide very effective support for the prayer and worshipping life of the school which is thought provoking, inspiring and engaging, and has a positive impact on pupils' lives within and beyond the school environment.

Areas to improve

- Further improve opportunities for pupils' spiritual growth by developing a shared understanding of spirituality which can then be used to inform planning across, and beyond, the curriculum so that pupils are able to think more deeply about things within and beyond themselves.
- Further develop pupils' understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit so that this becomes integral to their discussions and understanding of Christian teaching.

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

'One of God's richest blessings' is how one parent described Sarisbury CE Junior school. The impact of Christian character is outstanding because all members of the school community live out the school's core Christian values and are committed to, and proud of, their work as a church school. Leaders are very well supported by the whole staff team and the local clergy and parish community. Together they effectively drive the distinctive nature of this school.

Parents and pupils all agree that staff at Sarisbury put their core values into action by offering each and every family appropriate time, care and support. Members of the school community enthusiastically describe their place within this 'Christian family' and there is a very strong sense of belonging which is fully inclusive. One pupil described how he enjoyed learning about Christianity even though he was not a Christian, in a place where he felt truly valued and respected. Pupils and adults confidently, and naturally, refer to the core values and how they influence the way each and every member of the community lives out their lives and support one another. This is very evident in the strong and warm relationships which enable everyone to feel nurtured and supported. Parents in particular commented on the individual support that is extended to them as well as their children. This was clearly evident in the numbers of parents attending a mental health and well-being session being run in the school with the support of the school nurse service.

The school's core values underpin behaviour support, including support for a very small number of pupils with more challenging and complex needs. There is a high level of respect within the school and behaviour is exemplary. Pupils have a well-established sense of right and wrong but also understand compassion and forgiveness as essential values. This is clearly reinforced by the school's work towards accreditation as a 'Rights Respecting School' and by the work of the Year 6 peer mediating team, the 'Peace Team', who support friendship issues at playtimes. One pupil explained: 'We don't just have values that are there, we focus on them and think about how we can show them.'

The high value placed on developing each and every individual pupil can be seen in all classrooms. Effective teaching which engages pupils and enables them to strive for, and celebrate individual success, ensures that pupils achieve well and have high aspirations. Pupils are excited by their religious education (RE) lessons and are very knowledgeable about Bible stories, referencing links and making comparisons confidently. Teaching methods encourage children to debate, reflect, discuss and think deeply about ideas and concepts and this positively contributes to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils clearly explain how the residential trips offered allow them to learn how to put 'love, hope and forgiveness into action'. The good range of extra-curricular activities which include 'Bright Lights', a club where children can explore their own faith, add further to this. Although the work of the school clearly supports pupils' spiritual development, there is not yet a shared understanding of spirituality amongst staff, governors and pupils and if this is developed the school would be even better placed to further enhance its provision.

Pupils' progress is enhanced through very effective transition work, which begins when the pupils are in their infant school. A buddy system with Year 5 pupils, who then become the Year 6 pupils when the younger children move up from their infant school, is cited as being very effective transition support by both the pupils themselves and their parents. Parents describe how this starts the positive impact of the distinctive and special nature of Sarisbury as a church school.

The school has a strong connection to the local church, St Paul's. The school clearly benefits from the parish through visits and celebrations in the church, as well as the work of the clergy and parish community in the school. There is also benefit for the parish, as they have seen a growing number of families actively involved with parish celebrations. The vicar of St Paul's has also supported the school with a link to charitable work in Ethiopia and this, together with a link to a community in Kenya, has begun to help the pupils understand that Christianity is a world faith. However, this understanding is in its earliest stages and the school will need to develop this work further. Equally pupils have had limited opportunities to engage with others at a diocesan level. The school is aware of this and is exploring how it might engage with activities such as the 'Leavers Service' and workshops at Portsmouth Cathedral to address this aspect and enable pupils to gain an insight into belonging to a Christian community beyond their own local parish. Pupils have good opportunities to explore other faiths and beliefs through the RE curriculum.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The impact of worship is outstanding because it is well planned, relevant and engaging and is well-informed by feedback from pupils. The vicar of St Paul's, together with other members of the parish community, have been integral to the effective development of worship, and in particular in ensuring pupils are able to lead and fully engage

in prayer and worship in the school. The weekly 'Open Book' celebrations have a lasting impact on the children because they bring Bible stories to life with the pupils being supported to dramatise the events.

All pupils participate enthusiastically in worship, through drama, prayer and music. Pupils are very respectful and the invitational approach ensures that worship is inclusive. Pupils are encouraged to take the ideas explored in worship into their wider lives. This was evidenced by a Lenten activity which was being introduced that challenges pupils to carry out forty acts of kindness during the forty days of Lent. Parents spoke very positively about this activity as a way in which they could support their children and connect with worship in school. Parents and family members also enjoy the services in St Paul's and the year group led worship which they are invited to regularly in school. One parent described her experiences of worship in the school as 'uplifting'.

Worship enables pupils to reflect on and share their interpretation of the school's core values. One group of pupils shared a book that they had put together themselves to support other pupils who may be struggling to be a good friend. They had approached the headteacher with the book idea when they were concerned about some behaviour on the playground. They were given time to put the book together and then were able to share and present their ideas in a whole school worship which they planned and led. Other children referenced how this had made them think more carefully about friendship.

Worship is enhanced by the fact that a wide range of people support and lead worship. This includes the headteacher and all teaching staff, the local vicar and parish community and members of other Christian organisations and worshipping communities local to the school. Their varied and creative approaches ensure that worship is inspirational.

Every classroom has a worship space which is used to support a deeper exploration of the theme in focus for worship, at a class level. Pupils are encouraged to record their thoughts and ideas which often reflect very different points of view. This is clear evidence of the confidence pupils have to share their own views, whilst respecting the beliefs and ideas of others.

Following a visit from a member of the diocesan advisory service, the school has introduced special 'collectable' cards with the current Bible reading in focus written on them. The children are invited to take one of these cards home if they want to and many pupils have chosen to do this so that they can share at home what they are thinking about in school.

Pupils really appreciate the new opportunities they have been given to lead prayer within whole school worship and they are familiar with a number of prayers including their own school prayers and the Lord's Prayer. Some opportunities are given for pupils to pray spontaneously and recent work on prayer spaces developed with the support of Southampton City Mission, has been very successful in further developing pupils' understanding of the place and purpose of prayer.

Pupils enjoy the rituals that have been established within worship such as the lighting of a candle at the beginning, and they talk knowledgeably about traditional Christian celebrations such as Christmas and Easter. Knowledge of Anglican traditions is being further developed through reference to the liturgical seasons and the use of coloured cloths to reinforce this, as well as through the use of traditional prayers and hymns. Pupils have some understanding of the Trinity and how Christians understand God as three forms in one, but this is at the very early stages and is a key area for the school to focus on in order to enable pupils to deepen their understanding of this complex Christian concept.

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

Staff are passionate about Sarisbury and are very enthusiastic about their roles in the school. They feel very well supported by the headteacher who values their significant contributions and effectively supports their professional development. The assistant headteacher and subject leaders work very well as a team and are fully committed to the vision for the school. This all ensures that, collectively, there is outstanding leadership of Sarisbury as a church school.

All staff model the core values of love, hope and forgiveness and there are strong and positive relationships across the whole community as a result. The core values are understood as Christian values based on Christian teaching, and pupils understanding of the values is informed through both worship and the curriculum. There is still some work for leaders and governors to do to ensure that the previous inspection actions are fully met, as not all documentation, paper and electronic, clearly and explicitly link to the core values. Documentation does not always

reflect the strong practice in the school which is grounded in, and informed by, the distinctive Christian nature of the school.

Leaders have ensured that all pupils, including those facing additional challenges or disadvantage, are developed as well rounded young people ready for their next stages in life. This has been particularly evident in the range of responsibilities that are enjoyed by the pupils, which include 'Eco Team', 'School Council' and 'Peace Team'. These responsibilities not only develop their sense of moral and social responsibility but also give them a real voice in the school, which they really appreciate and value.

Communication is very effective at Sarisbury. Parents talked about the accessibility of staff and the school's willingness to listen and respond to any concerns no matter what they are. This enhances the family feel of the school which its community are very proud of.

Governors and leaders ensure that parent and pupil views are readily sought and all comments are effectively used to inform the school's own self-evaluation and plans for improvements. Governors are very supportive of the leadership team, recognising their strengths and achievements. Through the 'Forging Links' committee the school is challenged to develop further as a church school and it will be important that this committee continues to develop a strategic role so that the good work of the school is sustained and improved upon into the future.

The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship and ensures that it has an invitational and welcoming approach for all. Church links are strong and well established and this has a substantial and beneficial impact on the work of the school.

Governors and school leaders have ensured that staff have accessed good general training. In reference to some completed training, one member of the support staff team explained: 'I felt confident to go on a journey I never knew I could do. School made me confident.' Training and development has included support for staff to develop as effective leaders and staff reference how they are positively challenged to continually develop as professionals. However, more work could be done to support staff development in aspects specific to the distinctive nature of the school as a church school as this would significantly help to enhance provision, particularly in relation to spiritual development and leadership of church schools.

SIAMS report February 2018 Sarisbury Church of England Junior Southampton SO31 7AP