

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Arreton St. George Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

School Lane, Arreton, Isle of Wight. PO30 3AD

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Portsmouth
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Hampshire
Date of inspection	4 July 2018
Date of last inspection	9 July 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	118180
Executive Headteacher	Laura Bosworth
Head of School	Maria Herbert
Inspector's name and number	Lorraine Pugh 819

School context

Arreton St. George is a smaller than average rural primary school with 180 pupils on roll. In 2008 it joined with Oakfield Church of England school to form the Arreton and Oakfield Federation, with each of the schools having its own headteacher. Since 2014 the school has been through a period of turbulence with a significant dip in academic results. Oakfield school's headteacher took over the interim leadership of Arreton and this was followed by her permanent appointment in 2016 to the Executive Headteacher position overseeing both schools. An experienced long-standing senior teacher was appointed as Head of School in September 2017. Children come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds and from varying distances across the Isle of Wight. The children are taught in seven single aged classes. The number of children with diagnosed special educational needs and those receiving the pupil premium grant are below the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Arreton St. George as a Church of England school are good.

- The Christian ethos of the school, in which all children are highly valued, is leading to significant improvements to standards of personal development, academic achievement and well being.
- The school has established strong links between the Christian values, religious education (RE) and collective worship, each having Jesus and the Bible as a central focus.
- The strong commitment and vision of the school's leadership team in ensuring that the school continues to develop as a distinctively Christian school.

Areas to improve

- School leaders and governors need to embed their formalised procedures to support their monitoring role in evaluating the impact of the school's work as a distinctively Christian school.
- More opportunities are needed for children to have first hand faith experiences so they increase their knowledge of different religions, including their similarities and differences from Christianity.
- Allow the children to be more involved in the leadership, planning and evaluation of worship so they increase their ownership of this special time in the school day.
- Questioning in RE needs to be developed further so that children gain a deeper understanding of the themes.

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

Arreton St. George primary school is a caring Christian community where children value their school, friends and teachers. The commitment of the Executive Headteacher, strongly supported by the new RE leader and Head of School, is clearly evident and an instrumental feature in the school's continuing development as a Christian school. Core Christian values of friendship, perseverance and honesty are explicitly taught and referred to often during the school day, impacting positively on the children's academic, spiritual and moral development. In 2017 a consultation process involving children, staff and parents was undertaken to choose the values and this has successfully increased their ownership by the whole school community. Biblical references are linked to each value so that children understand why they are Christian. Children say they feel very proud when they are awarded a 'Value' certificate for behaviour inside or outside of the classroom, such as being a good supportive friend. Increased rigour in monitoring by the school's leadership has led to raised children's achievement. Attainment and progress are now close to the expected national academic standards. Professional dialogue, sharing of ideas and opportunities to compare work standards with Oakfield primary have benefitted both schools and this has been a key factor in Arreton's raised academic performance. The school views every child as unique in the eyes of God and strives to support each child whatever their needs. This has successfully raised some children's self esteem and behaviour to a level that positively impacts on their academic development. Behaviour, inside and outside of lessons, is of a high standard with children clearly showing respect and kindness to each other and adults in the school. One child, explaining their understanding of the values stated, 'Perseverance is when you keep going even when it's a challenge. Noah did this when he built the ark and people laughed at him.' Children gain an understanding of their role in the local and wider community through their charity activities and this allows them to witness the difference that helping others can make. Children have a voice in choosing who they want to help, such as their request to support the local food-bank. The children also participate in many local festivals, for example, the community 'Lights of Love' service and the annual 'Sweetcorn Fayre'. This successfully gives them a sense of belonging within the relatively small population of the Isle of Wight. The school's established links with the local Anglican and Methodist churches deepen the Christian character of the school. Parents speak very highly of the school's care and they are keen to describe the importance of the school's Christian ethos and its welcoming, inclusive atmosphere. Children have respect for faiths other than Christianity, however, increased first hand experiences are needed to strengthen their understanding within a predominantly white British community. The recent Jewish visitors made a great impact on the children, giving them an understanding of the importance of each faith to its followers. Children enjoy RE and teachers are successfully increasing their knowledge of other faiths. However, questioning needs to be developed further so that children gain a deeper understanding of the themes.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.

Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and children talk confidently about its themes, which are often linked to the core Christian values of friendship, perseverance and honesty. In worship, children are attentive and participate with enthusiasm, especially when singing or sharing their prayers. The two local clergy play an active role in the leading of worship and they are also involved in its planning and organisation throughout the Christian year. This includes links to the Christian values and the RE curriculum. A range of worship leaders allows the children to have rich experiences of worship styles. Children participate in special services through the year such as Remembrance and feast days. The children have learned the Lord's Prayer, Anglican liturgical greetings and the five key prayers used across the federation during the day. Children have an understanding of the Trinity at an age appropriate level with adults making sure that language is simple. For example, the lighting of the three coloured candles with each representing God. Close working between the school and church encourages children to openly share thoughts to aid their understanding. For example, asking the vicar, 'What do you do on Sunday and why?' Worship focuses around the work of Jesus and his central position within Christianity and children talk confidently about familiar Bible stories and the lessons within them. One child described the trust in God that was shown by David when he had to face Goliath. Children like being involved in leading worship and two children from each class take on the Worship Leader role, collecting the views and ideas of their class. Children say that they enjoy their regular church visits for services, especially when they have an active role. Parents say they enjoy attending worship with the children. Children are able to explain how they use prayer in their own lives and how this supports them, explaining that you can pray anywhere because 'God knows you are there – when things get tough God is beside you keeping you going'. There is a shared understanding of spirituality to support planned curriculum opportunities. Special moments that just happen are also recognised, with time given for reflection. Children are invited to share their own spiritual moments with contributions to the school spiritual board. This successfully encourages children's appreciation of themselves, others and the world around them. Each classroom has a worship space, providing a focus for the class worship and children are keen to explain the ways in which they use it.

The effectiveness of religious education is good.

The religious education (RE) curriculum is exciting and engaging and its content impacts positively on shaping the school's Christian character. RE assessment is currently under review due to the school's introduction of the new Understanding Christianity resource, this being a major change to the school's RE provision. This new resource was adopted after careful consideration of how it could positively impact on the existing RE curriculum. The new RE leader works closely with the RE leader in Oakfield primary school. This strong partnership successfully facilitates professional dialogue and the sharing of ideas. This has resulted in on-going development and improvement to RE teaching and learning. School leaders hold interviews with the children to gauge their thoughts on RE lessons. The findings inform future planning. Teachers are supported by professional development and governors also get involved in this by attending training alongside the teachers. Teachers say they value the support and guidance of the RE leader. RE themes include regular references to the Christian values of the school and it is taught by the class teachers to maximise pupil interest, enthusiasm and impact. This also allows further clarification beyond the RE lesson. There is positive learning behaviour of children in lessons and teachers display suitably high levels of subject knowledge, for example, the year 6 class were seen to explore the differences and similarities of how Jesus and Mohammed are viewed as leaders in their respective religions. Lessons are supported with engaging resource materials, which help to bring RE themes to life. The school's clergy have helped the children to understand Anglican traditions and rituals such as marriage and baptism services. During the marriage service the children wrote their own vows and this helped them to understand the meaning of the service. There is a programme of regular monitoring and evaluation, which informs the future development of high quality RE teaching. Governors have a strong presence within the school and undertake their own regular monitoring of RE. Children understand that Britain is a country of many faiths and cultures. They know the importance of faith to those who believe and explain that this is why all faiths should be respected. More opportunities are needed for children to have first hand faith experiences so they increase their knowledge of different religions, including their similarities and differences from Christianity. The recent visit from people following the Jewish faith engaged the children with their explanation of the Shabbat dinner, their special clothes and worship in the Synagogue.

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

The executive headteacher has a clear and passionate Christian vision for the school and she is well supported by the head of school, clergy, staff and governors. Since the last inspection there has been significant turbulence both in standards and leadership. However, the school's present leaders have a very accurate view of the school's improvement needs due to a rigorous monitoring and evaluation schedule. Over the last two years, stronger leadership has brought about rapid improvement with the full support and involvement of governors and staff. This has maintained a vibrant, caring school where all individuals are valued. Development points from the last SIAMS inspection have been met. Children are central to all decisions, with the emphasis on their academic and emotional development. Strengthened partnerships with the Diocese, federation RE leader meetings and liaison with other church schools are ensuring staff and governors benefit from personal, professional and spiritual development. Moderation activities between the two federation schools have been successful in sharing ideas as well as highlighting areas for improvement. The introduction of the 'Understanding Christianity' materials and use of the Hampshire agreed RE syllabus have given staff a greater understanding of key Christian concepts and this has impacted on improved RE provision and quality. The governors work well together and they understand their role in developing the school's Christian ethos and what it means to be a Christian school. They have a clear vision for the school's Christian development and the actions needed to fulfil this. Formal systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's work are being re-established and these systems now need to embed into regular practice. The school greatly values and benefits from its close partnership with the local Anglican and Methodist churches. The clergy play an important role in helping teachers and children prepare for church worship services, for example the Remembrance service. The school's activities are regular features in the parish magazine, helping to establish its place in the local community. Parents say the school provides a gentle, caring environment where their children can develop and learn from their mistakes. The school's ambition for each and every child is clearly evident. Parents say that recent improvements to communications with increased information about the school, including worship themes, have been appreciated. They say their children often refer to the Christian values at home. Statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met.