



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Walsh Memorial Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School

Ash Street
Ash
Surrey GU12 6LT

Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding

Current SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Guildford

Local authority: Surrey

Dates of inspection: 12 January 2016

Date of last inspection: 9 November 2010

School's unique reference number: 125135

Headteacher: Suzanne Cawson

Inspector's name and number: Andrew Rickett 201

School context

Walsh Memorial is smaller than the average size infant school with 169 pupils on roll. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. The majority of pupils are from a white British heritage. They come from diverse socio economic backgrounds. Children enter the school with skills slightly below national expectations. Attendance is above national average. The school shares the site with the junior school which is also a Church of England school. The school is part of a confederation with eight other local schools.

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

- The inclusivity of the Christian ethos means that all pupils, whether they have a faith or not, confidently share their views on matters of faith and belief.
- Acts of worship make a significant contribution to the development of the pupil's personal spirituality.
- School leaders ensure that the Christian ethos maintains a high profile among the whole community and continues to develop.

Areas to improve

- Develop a shared understanding of reflection, including the use of questions of meaning and purpose, to enhance the opportunities for the development of children's wellbeing and spiritual growth.
- Equip children with a range of strategies that enable them to build their skills for personal reflection.
- Ensure that the Christian values explored in collective worship have an increasing impact on the children's ability to reflect and explore their thoughts in greater depth.

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

The school's Christian character is outstanding because it gives pupils the opportunity to explore what a relationship with faith and belief can be and how it can impact on a person's life. It achieves this very well and in an inclusive way. Pupils are comfortable to express their views on faith and do so with confidence. Parents say that their children are not afraid to ask questions about faith and feel that this is a reflection of the school's ethos that 'allows children to be themselves'. The ethos is underpinned by a strong emphasis on explicit Christian values and prayer and with the contribution of collective worship and religious education (RE) has created an environment in which the needs of pupils are at the centre of school life. This has a strong impact on their attitudes towards learning and is reflected in the pupil's performance which has been consistently above national expectations for a number of years. The development of the Peace Garden and the prayer nook has provided greater opportunities for pupils to have time and space to reflect. They are proud of these areas and say that they help them to be still and think if they are sad. Religious education also makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' opportunities to reflect as part of their spiritual growth. Opportunities for reflection in classrooms have not yet been fully developed, or how questioning across the whole curriculum can help pupils develop the skills for personal reflection. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. Adults and children treat each other with great respect and with an appreciation for the views and opinions of others. Pupils say that they feel safe and understand the need to show kindness to everyone whoever they are. The school works hard to provide pupils with opportunities to understand the diversity of faiths and cultures in Britain and around the world. For example, recent improvements to the school library include a wider variety of books on other world faiths as well as Christianity.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is outstanding because of the opportunities it provides for pupils to explore explicitly Christian values that make a positive impact on their growing spiritual awareness. The provision within acts of worship has improved since the previous inspection because there is now a clearer programme of themes linked to eleven core values which in turn have been further linked to themes from social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL). Together, the values and SEAL themes are underpinned by Bible teaching which gives an explicit Christian message to the act of worship. Pupils are clearly aware of this and say that the stories Jesus told help them 'to be a better person'. The current worship programme has been in place for less than a year and the depth at which pupils understand each value and reflect on their meaning has not yet been fully explored. However, the impact of the values already covered is evident in pupil responses when discussing their views on values such as respect, trust and hope. This evidence has been gathered through highly effective evaluation of the impact of these values carried out with pupils by their class teachers. The collation of this monitoring by the headteacher has identified areas for further improvement which have been reported to the governing body. The school therefore has robust procedures in place to ensure that the impact of collective worship is constantly under review. Acts of worship are distinct times in the school day and provide opportunities for pupils to experience Anglican worship both in school and in the local church. Pupils' understanding of the meaning and purpose of prayer has considerable depth and maturity for their age. They articulate their views on the nature of prayer with confidence and openly talk of their understanding of angels and how they might help them talk to God. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their own understanding of the Trinity. They are growing in their ability to express their understanding of God as Father and Jesus as His Son. They say that both are alive and in heaven. There is less understanding of the Holy Spirit. Pupils participate well in collective worship and have good opportunities to be involved through prayer and drama. The school has identified the need to develop opportunities for pupils to explore worship themes in greater depth.

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

The headteacher, well supported by other senior leaders and the governing body, is committed to the promotion of the distinctive Christian ethos and has ensured that it has not only been maintained but in a number of areas has been enhanced over the last five years. In particular, the headteacher has led the school community in reviewing the school values and by linking them to other areas of school life, such as personal, social and health education, which has enhanced their impact. The leadership has effectively addressed the one area for development from the previous report by designing and building the Peace Garden and creating a 'prayer nook' to provide a place for pupils to reflect. The high quality of leadership is evident in the headteacher's clear understanding that more can still be done to widen the experiences that pupils have to reflect in the everyday life of the school. Self-evaluation as a church school is accurate and thorough. Reviews of collective worship and RE have been effectively undertaken by staff and governors in a systematic way. The involvement of the parent focus group in discussions about church school distinctiveness has added an important voice to the overall evidence that has contributed to self-evaluation. Governors articulate clearly the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the Christian ethos and how it shapes the life of the school. The leadership and management have a very good capacity to continue to develop the school as a church school. Links with the local church are a particular strength and characterised by the strong sense of ownership that pupils have towards 'their' church building. The rector is a well-known member of the school community through his involvement in acts of worship and contribution to governance. Parents say that their children are 'allowed to be themselves' in the school and appreciate that they are encouraged to ask questions about faith and belief. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report January 2016 Walsh Memorial CE Infant School Ash GUI2 6LT