

West Park CE Primary School

Marlborough Road Worthing West Sussex BN12 4HD	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Chichester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	West Sussex
Date of inspection	21 November 2017
Date of last inspection	17 April 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 126016
Headteacher	Caitriona Bull
Inspector's name and number	Jacqueline Cobb 926

School context

West Park is a larger than the average - sized primary with 734 pupils on roll. The school changed to a primary school in September 2015 from a first and middle school. Currently there are different numbers of classes in each year group until it becomes 4 forms of entry throughout by 2021. The school has a specialist support unit, which caters for pupils with additional needs or disability. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average, as is pupils where English is an additional language. The school was judged to be good by Ofsted in February 2016.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of West Park as a Church of England Primary school are good

- Senior leaders, staff and governors articulate a clear shared vision where stakeholders, especially the pupils, can make connections to the daily life of the school.
- The Christian character of the school is underpinned by Christian values, which results in the school community feeling that they are part of a family. Pupils' behaviour, based on the Gospel value of forgiveness, is positive and respectful both in classrooms and around the school.
- The varied worship programme contributes effectively to the school's good provision of spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development opportunities which pupils respond to positively.
- Christian values underpin the beliefs, behaviours and attitudes of staff and pupils. This has resulted in a calm, purposeful learning environment where pupils are nurtured as individuals.

Areas to improve

- Create more opportunities for pupils to deepen their own spirituality through reflection and prayer.
- Make the biblical links of the school's values more explicit to stakeholders so that they understand the values are part of the school's Christian foundation.
- Improve the pupils' voice in the development of worship and enable them to have more involvement in the planning and leadership of worship to engage them further.

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

West Park is a large primary school which has a nurturing and welcoming community with a strong 'family feel'. This is a clear expression of its Christian vision and values as a school that will 'enable each pupil to develop a sense of their own identity and spirituality.' Pupils talk confidently about the values and the reason they are important to them, one pupil said, 'they help you in school and in life'.

The recent introduction of 'Understanding Christianity', focused on developing a deeper religious, theological and cultural literacy, has inspired and motivated staff and pupils. Pupils are very positive about learning in religious education (RE), both the new Christianity units and the teaching about other major world faiths in the curriculum. Pupils talk confidently about their learning, 'we get to answer big questions' and the importance of learning about different religions. RE makes a positive contribution to the Christian character of the school

The good behaviour seen during the inspection confirms the self-evaluation that there are very good relationships between pupils, pupils and staff and the parents and the school, underpinned by the Christian vision. Relationship support the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils through the curriculum and extra-curricular activities such as the Lighthouse Club, which is an after school Christian club for key stage 2 pupils. Parents describe the school as being very inclusive and having a strong moral code, 'All the children are appreciated for who they are' The staff team are united in leading by example, 'we live inclusion, all pupils get the same chance to succeed.'

Pupils' behaviour both in classrooms and around the school is positive and respectful, demonstrating their understanding of values in action. Expectations for behaviour are based on respect, making good choices and the Gospel value of forgiveness; pupils enjoy the responsibility of caring for younger pupils, for example the '5 Alive' group who support at playtimes; they spoke compassionately of a peer who had a sibling in hospital and how they had decided to raise money for the hospital. There is a breadth of support for charity, including the NSPCC, Children in Need and harvest thanksgiving donations.

Academic standards have improved and the school's inclusive approach has encouraged good attendance. One leader commented that difficult conversations are possible because of the strong relationships the school has with their families. Pupils' well-being has a high priority throughout the school.

Outdoor learning makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Beach school activities enrich the curriculum and develop pupils' awareness of the natural world. One pupil commented that when they are in the quiet garden they feel calm, relaxed and are able to pray saying that this allows them to grow closer to God.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is clearly seen as important. Pupils talk about the importance of the school community coming together and sharing as well as learning about God and Jesus and having the time to 'pray so that God knows you.' Staff regularly attend worship and appreciate the opportunities provided to reflect with pupils on what is important to them as a school community

Collective worship is held across the school in key stage groups. This allows further exploration of the Christian values in age-appropriate contexts, for example a Year 5 worship observed allowed pupils the opportunity to reflect on the parable of the talents and to draw parallels with their own talents and how they can use them for the good of others. Whole school worship is led by the headteacher, senior leadership team and vicar. Their leadership of worship models good practice to staff leading worship and ensures connections are made between class and collective worship. As well as weekly worship sessions led by the vicar, the whole school, over 700 pupils, attends worship in church to celebrate the Christian year through marking the key festivals of Easter, harvest and Christmas. Older pupils in the school felt it was important that they attended church as a school community as, 'being in church feels different, it is inspirational.' Anglican patterns of worship are reflected in the distinct aspects of gathering, engaging, responding and sending. Further experiences of Anglican worship are provided in a termly Eucharist.

The weekly themes planned by the headteacher, who is also worship coordinator, are linked to the 'Values for Life' resource and the church year. Values continue to be a focus outside of worship, supporting pupils to make links between Bible messages and their own experiences. A take-away task for the week links the theme of worship to class reflection areas where pupils express their thoughts. Pupils spoke of occasionally having difficulties within friendships and how remembering the value of forgiveness helped them to move on. The impact of worship is strong. Pupils commented on taking inspiration from what God has told you through the parables Jesus told. Questions in reflection areas, such as, 'Can you do a kind deed for someone today?' prompt pupils to consider their own behaviour and relationships with others. Pupil evaluations show they enjoy worship as being, 'special times to be reflective, important to teach us values for life and time to pray.' They are proud of the prayers around humility they had written on flags, displayed in the front entrance for all to see before they went

out into the quiet garden. Prayer and reflection are woven through school life and, as a result, pupils have a good understanding of the place and purpose of both personal and collective prayer. In Year 6, as part of transition, the school has developed a prayer trail which is about the pupils' hopes, dreams, wishes and reflections.

Pupils have been introduced to the concept of the Trinity and it is being explored in different imaginative and memorable ways, for example, the Trinity as an apple with the skin being God the Father, protecting, the flesh as God the Son and the seeds as the Holy Spirit who helps us to grow. Older pupils interviewed could talk about this and said how they had asked for 3 candles in collective worship to represent the Trinity so that they could remember it. Since the last inspection governors now form part of a monitoring group which look at a range of evidence, including pupils' views, to discuss the quality and impact of worship.

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

Leaders at all levels are passionate and committed to the development of the school as a church school. They know their school well and are taking action to develop the Christian distinctiveness further. One member of staff said, 'I like working in a church school because it enables us to have reflection time together about things that are important to us.' The leadership team, governors and staff have ambitions for every child.

The headteacher is committed to exploring and developing the Christian ethos of the school in partnership with the whole school community and all stakeholders speak positively of the impact she has had. Parents are very positive about the school, the leadership team, the high expectations and rising standards as well as the nurturing ethos. Parents interviewed say that they are kept well informed about what is happening at school. They feel that their children are well cared for and that the staff are inspirational in their children's learning and development.

They are aware of the school as a church school and appreciate the school's open attitude towards the Christian ethos that welcomes questions and debate and underpins the support for their children. Pertinent displays in the entrance of the school about religious education, give parents an overview of the learning across the school and came about in response to parents' concerns raised about learning other world religions.

A parents' forum provides a platform to be part of the school moving forward. Parent evaluations from 2016 show that 95% of parents agree/strongly agree that their child is developing their knowledge of the Christian faith through religious education and collective worship. One parent described the school as, 'my rock.' A parents' prayer group meets regularly to pray for staff, pupils and their families. There is a reflection area in the entrance to the school with a prayer box and pupils place prayers in here knowing they will be used by the parent prayer group. Staff commented that knowing the parents' prayer group is praying for them gives them strength. Parents rose to the challenge of fund raising for a new library which was opened this month and is another example of the strength of the relationship the school has.

The governors are a visible presence across the school, for example, governors are available for parents to speak to on parents' evenings, as well as regular communications through newsletters. Pupils know who their class governor is.

The governors have had recent training on strategic questioning to ensure they maintain their role as critical friend to the school and the ethos committee are rigorous in ensuring self-evaluation is accurate. School leaders prioritised Christian distinctiveness as an area for focussed improvements; this year the school development plan has prioritised the training and two-year roll-out of the resource Understanding Christianity in order to further develop the school's distinctiveness. This year's school development plan includes an expectation that all governors will come into worship and complete an evaluation sheet. The impact of this in moving worship forward is not yet measurable.

Leaders have ensured that collective worship has been central to the improvement of church school distinctiveness. They have started to find ways to send home the good news of the Christian values being taught and lived out in school with a specific newsletter about the value; however the impact of this has not yet been able to be measured. The school is working with the parish council to raise funds for the children to have the opportunity to visit Chichester cathedral and other significant places of worship to enrich their understanding of Christian tradition through first hand experiences.

Arrangements for collective worship and RE meet statutory requirements