

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### St. Lawrence Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior School

Church Road East Molesey Surrey KT8 9DR

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Guildford</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Surrey
Date of inspection	8 December 2016
Date of last inspection	13 October 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	125179
Headteacher	Damian Tucker
Inspector's name and number	David Hatrey 844

#### School context

St Lawrence is a larger than average junior school. The number of children eligible for pupil premium support or who have English as an additional language is below national averages. The number of children with learning difficulties or disabilities is in line with the national average. The school is currently going through a complete re-build.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Lawrence Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior School as a Church of England school are good

- Distinctive Christian values are embedded in the life and learning of the school and children are confident to articulate the difference this makes to their lives and their attainment.
- RE (religious education) 'experience days' provide opportunities for children to learn about Christian festivals and Jesus' teaching and their relevance to their lives.
- Children make good relationships with their peers and show respect and care for each other in a variety of ways.
- The leadership team have a clear vision of what it means in being a church school and in living it out in a vibrant school community.

#### Areas to improve

- Create a range of high quality opportunities to develop children's spirituality so they can express their deepening ideas in a variety of ways.
- Enable children to plan, lead and evaluate worship regularly so they develop real ownership in this area.
- Establish a rigorous system of monitoring involving all members of the school community to ensure the on-going evaluation of all aspects of the school's Christian distinctiveness leading to further improvements.

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

Five core distinct Christian values have been effectively woven into teaching and learning and the daily life of the school. These are: resilience, reconciliation, righteousness, redemption, and respect. Children have a good understanding of these values and can explain how they can be expressed in everyday life. For example, there are opportunities to nominate a peer to become a values ambassador where children have to explain why they have done this, to reflect their understanding of the values. These are prestigious awards for children being living role models. They have a good understanding of these values and make links to Bible stories which exemplify their meaning. They can explain the significance of these and how they can be demonstrated in daily life. They recognise that these values come from God, which Jesus developed through His teaching and that we can learn more about these in the Bible. Through being woven into teaching and learning, they can see the contribution which they make to both their learning and achievement. For example they talk about being resilient in learning. They talk confidently about righteousness and how this challenges them to make the right decisions. Increasingly they are posing the question, what would Jesus do in this situation and reflecting on ideas they have shared to provide answers. The conclusion they reached was that values make a difference to their lives and choices. Staff model these values in their own daily interactions and establish strong relationships with children. Behaviour is of a high standard,. Where there are minor issues they are encouraged to reflect on their actions, the consequences for others and how their values inform what they do. Relationships are strong, children value the ideas of peers and work collaboratively. This is seen in the responses in charity work, where children have developed projects to fund raise for those in need. There are times to reflect and develop spiritually and opportunity to record their ideas in a class worship reflection book or in personal reflection journals. Whilst there is some evidence of a growing depth of thought, the language used is at an early stage of development and opportunities have not yet been identified for children to explore spirituality in greater depth. Visitors from the faiths studied help children to understand how different beliefs influence their actions and worship, through first hand questioning and exploring artefacts. Children are interested in other faiths and are confident to make thoughtful comparisons between their own faith and others and show respect and tolerance for those who hold different views to their own.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Planning for worship develops children's understanding of Christian values and allows time to explore different aspects in greater depth. Christian festivals and current issues are included, linked to a Biblical verse. Staff are well supported to lead worship through training by the experienced and knowledgeable coordinator. Children appreciate the diverse approaches to worship from local clergy and others. The church youth chaplain also leads worship, is available for children to talk to and leads the "living waters" club where children explore values at a greater depth. 'Open the Book' worship is popular, and children enjoy the way Bible stories are brought to life through drama. Worship has a high profile in the life of the school and is seen as a special time for all to share with God. Thought provoking teaching gives children ideas to consider in reflection times, which enables them to see the relevance to daily life and what this might look like. Most children recognise that this makes a difference to their thinking and actions and can give examples of where this happens. A frequent response is, "it helps me to solve problems." Singing is a strong feature in worship. As one child said, "God gives us special voices to sing." Major Christian festivals are celebrated in church or school with the community invited to share. Children take a prominent role in these, preparing prayers and sharing ideas. They show a good understanding of the meaning of these festivals and talked enthusiastically about Christingle. Prayer is developed thoughtfully with younger children. All children know that prayer is a way of sharing their thoughts and ideas with God and that they can do this in different ways. Children are helped to move on from this to thinking about praying for others and national events. Teaching about the Lord's prayer deepens their understanding of prayer and some children use this model to shape their own thoughts. There is evidence of children's thoughts in prayer maturing as they reflect on these. A prayer/reflection area provides opportunities to write prayers, place them in the prayer box, knowing the church prayer team will pray about these. Worship is monitored informally, governors and others attend quite regularly and verbal comments are forwarded to governor's meetings, but no further action to improve is taken. There are currently no targets to develop worship. Staff monitor worship on an informal level, although children do not. There are limited opportunities for children to lead worship. Children have a good knowledge of Jesus and can talk knowledgeably about His teaching. Thoughtful teaching about the Trinity has raised children's understanding which they can articulate with increasing clarity.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Standards in RE are generally in line with national expectations and compare well with other core subjects. Whilst children's knowledge when they start school is often below expectations, this is swiftly addressed and children make accelerated progress in Years 3 and 4. Disadvantaged children also make good progress from their starting points and are well supported. The number of children achieving the higher levels of attainment was limited, but is now rising. New initiatives in RE such as an enquiry approach where children are posing questions and exploring answers to them, are becoming more embedded. There are good examples of children beginning to use and develop higher order thinking skills in their work and discussions. These are seen when big issues are considered, such as, "Are there things that money can't buy?" Children are experimenting in expressing their ideas in different ways, such as through art where they might make symbols for the Holy Spirit to explain their thinking. Teaching about Christianity, explores Jesus' stories and parables and their meaning and how they give guidance on how they can live their lives. This initiative encourages posing questions such as, "What would Jesus do?" or "What does this tell us about God?", thus extending their understanding of Christian values. Learning objectives are clearly set and are well matched to age-related ability, with success criteria provided which set out what they can achieve. Children are involved in reviewing their own progress as to what they have achieved and what they can do to further improve. This is increasingly supported through marking where individual questions are set to extend thinking. The RE leader's expertise stands out and ensures this area has a high profile. She has created a new assessment strategy which is being piloted, with the information gained informing planning. She monitors lessons identifying strengths and gives guidance on how to further raise the impact of teaching. The quality of teaching is good overall. RE 'experience days' are well established and provide rich interactive opportunities to explore issues in depth. For example, "a forest of faith day" had a focus on children reflecting on what their roots are, how they are unique and can develop fruit in terms of the actions and qualities they develop. An assessment as to impact these have has not yet been undertaken. Governors receive reports on progress in RE, but as yet they are not involved in monitoring lessons. Children are enthusiastic when given opportunity to express their opinions, listen to others and refine their own beliefs.

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

"Achieving, believing, caring," summarises the school's Christian vision. Children are at the centre of this with the aspiration for them to fully realise their potential academically and in all areas where they have God given talents. They experience what it is to be part of a Christian community where everyone is special as children of God and unique. Christian values underpin the life and work of the school. The leadership team is dedicated, enthusiastic and committed and has created a strong cohesive staff team who work very well together in taking the school forward. Christian distinctiveness is demonstrated in the high priority given to worship and RE and how well Christian values are woven into school life and learning. This has created a real sense of being a community of which children are proud to be part. The school is heartened of pupil attainment in recent years which has been above national expectations in all key subjects. There is a focus on teaching and learning and developing good attitudes to learning, to enable children to become confident in their own ability and want to be successful. The support given by staff and teaching assistants enables disadvantaged children to make good progress from their starting points. There is an effective range of provision covering diverse needs. A number of case studies show how effective these are in making a real difference to children's lives and attainment. Governors are committed to the school, involved in monitoring academic progress and to support and challenge as necessary. This does not extend to fully evaluating the impact of the school's Christian distinctiveness or the impact of the provision for spirituality. Monitoring is at an informal level and lacks sufficient rigour. Currently there are no targets to further raise the impact of the school's Christian distinctiveness or other aspects of being a church school. The local church makes a very full contribution to the life of the school, notably through leading worship and through governance. Funding for the chaplain and supporting RE 'experience days', both at church and school, makes a clear impact on what the school offers. Pastoral support for all has a high priority for clergy and others who are seen as part of the school family. Parents recognise the support and care staff give and the quality of relationships built up and see staff as going beyond expectations. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report December 2016 St. Lawrence CE VA Junior School East Moseley Surrey KT8 9DR