



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Newington Church of England Primary School	School Lane, Newington ME9 7LB
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese/Methodist District	Canterbury
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Good
Local authority	Kent
Name of federation	Federated with Lower Halstow primary school
Date of inspection	7 October 2016
Date of last inspection	7 September 2011
School's unique reference number	118649
Executive Headteacher	Cathy Walker
Inspector's name and number	Anne Southgate 820

School context

Newington is smaller than the average sized primary school. It is federated with a local community school and there is a joint governing body. The executive headteacher was previously deputy head of Newington and headteacher of Lower Halstow. She therefore knows both schools well. There has been a high turnover of staff since the last inspection, but staffing is now stable. Most pupils are from white British backgrounds, although a higher than average number of pupils are of Romany or Gypsy heritage. The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is greater than the national average. A higher than average number of pupils do not spend all of their primary years at the school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Newington as a Church of England school are good

- Governors have worked closely with school leaders to produce a clear set of Christian values, which are securely based on biblical stories.
- There is a very positive partnership with the local church, which supports the school in supporting families and in teaching about Christianity.
- There is considerable and effective expertise in religious education (RE), so that pupils progress well in RE.
- There is good support for pupils and their families, so that attendance and progress are improving.

Areas to improve

- Focus on ensuring that each individual child flourishes, including those who join the school towards the end of their primary education, so that levels of attainment are raised.
- Involve governors in a regular cycle of self-evaluation so that their positive contributions are collected more often.
- Ensure that all policies are clearly rooted in Christian values, so that everyone understands the Christian basis to the school's work.

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

Since the previous SIAS inspection the school's Christian values have been reviewed and replaced with the values of generosity, flourishing, welcoming and forgiving. These are securely based on biblical stories. Pupils speak with ease about how, for example, Jesus welcomed Zacchaeus, a tax collector. This addresses an action point from the previous inspection. Pupils who display the values are nominated by staff, including non-teaching staff for awards. For example a boy, who showed generosity by giving money he had won to a charity, was thanked and celebrated during collective worship. This has raised both staff and pupils' awareness of how the values can be lived.

Pupils and their families are given an impressive level of support to help them to flourish. As a result, progress is good, although attainment is low. The good progress pupils make is underpinned by strong relationships of trust. Pupils are helped to reflect on their behaviour and to consider the feelings of others. They are offered forgiveness and a fresh start. Occasionally pupils have been excluded so that they have more time to reflect on their actions and to have a fresh start. Most pupils behave well.

As a result of the strengthened Christian character of the school, pupils develop well spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. Pupils embrace and celebrate diversity. This is aided by a wide range of activities, such as visits to places of worship and 'diversity day'. RE is taught well and it engages pupils with active learning, such as a class talent show. Many teachers use skilful questioning to prompt pupils to think deeply and to reflect on their own views and on those of others.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Despite coming from mainly non-religious backgrounds, pupils gather respectfully for worship. Pupils and adults participate readily, often with enthusiasm. All teachers sometimes lead worship and pupils increasingly lead aspects of worship. Pupils appreciate the range of worship leaders and they particularly enjoy worship led by local clergy and by the Family Trust. As a result, pupils experience a range of traditions and styles of worship, including local Anglican practice. Collective worship usually focuses on biblical stories and often relates these to the school's core values. A wide range of Christian festivals is celebrated, many of them in the church with parents. Pupils have particularly enjoyed a joyful Mardi Gras before Lent and a Pentecost party.

Prayers that pupils have written in their classes, often in the prayer corners, are used by leaders in collective worship. Pupils therefore feel that their prayers are important. Most pupils have a reasonable understanding for their age of the life of Jesus and of key Christian beliefs. Some can explain that the belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is similar to water existing as a liquid, as steam and as ice.

Teachers and pupils monitor and evaluate collective worship regularly. This addresses an issue from the previous inspection. As a result of pupil evaluation, pupils now participate more in worship and frequently dramatise the stories told.

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

The executive headteacher and head of school work very closely together and they share a vision of the school welcoming and serving the local community. They work to build the resilience and aspirations of the pupils, so that they can flourish. An effective governing body has worked with leaders to establish a clear set of Christian

values, which are clearly underpinned by biblical stories. However, school policies are not all based explicitly on the school's Christian values. Nevertheless, the Christian values result in a compassionate and supportive approach to families. There is a strong focus on raising attainment and pupils are aware that they should make the most of their talents and flourish academically. However, the impact of this is not evident in reported attainment results, even though pupils make good progress from their starting points.

Leaders, including the incumbent and governors, have attended training to help them to understand and to improve their leadership of a church school. The RE leader regularly accesses diocesan training and she leads RE well. This addresses an action point from the previous inspection. As a result of the expertise of the RE leader and of the work of another RE specialist teacher in the school, the quality of RE is good. All teachers are supported in delivering RE and collective worship and in teaching about the school's Christian values. This means that the school is developing future leaders of church schools well. The school meets statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

There is a very strong and beneficial relationship with the local church. The school and church share joint outreach work to the local community. They hold a range of activities to support and to engage pupils and parents, such as an alternative halloween celebration in the church. A significant number of parents attend school worship in church.

Self-evaluation as a church school is accurate, and has recently included governors. However, there is no regular pattern of self-evaluation with governors. This means that the helpful contributions they offer in discussion with leaders are not always written down.

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