

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Sir Henry Fermor Church of England Primary School			
Address	Crowborough Hill, Crowborough, East Sussex, TN6 2SD		
Date of inspection	18/June/2019	Status of school	Academy inspected as Voluntary Aided part of The Tenax Schools Trust
Diocese	Chichester	URN	142611

Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	Grade	Good
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Good

School context

Sir Henry Fermor is a primary school with 382 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The school has a very low level of pupils from other heritages. Very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages. The school has experienced significant changes in leadership prior to and following joining The Tenax School's Trust in April 2016. OfSTED judged the school to be 'good' in February 2019.

The school's Christian vision

'Sir Henry Fermor school enables everyone to succeed; as Jesus teaches through the Parable of The Lost Sheep: no one is left behind. Inspiring children and adults, believing in God at the heart of all we do, through Christ's love and guidance; all in the Sir Henry Fermor family flourish, achieving fullness.'

Key findings

- Strong Christian leadership of the headteacher is greatly appreciated by the staff, pupils, governors and Trust. Spiritual development is not clearly understood and opportunities to develop this understanding are limited.
- Inclusive, nurturing relationships, inspired by the Parable of the Lost Sheep, motivate and support all members of the school community. This fulfils the vision ensuring no-one is left behind.
- Strong, mutually beneficial links with the Parish Church and Trust contribute meaningfully to the school's distinctive Christian character. However, formal monitoring of the school's Christian distinctiveness, collective worship and religious education (RE) is limited and its impact therefore lessened.
- Well planned collective worship gives significant opportunities for pupil leadership and builds success.
- RE enables pupils to engage with five world faiths so extending their understanding of diversity in the world today. However the governors have not decided on which RE syllabus to follow.

Areas for development

- To establish a whole school definition of spiritual development, that encompasses the school vision and is enabled by clear curriculum opportunities. This will be evident in the attributes a child leaving Sir Henry Fermor Primary School will have developed.
- To establish rigorous and regular monitoring and evaluation of Christian Distinctiveness, collective worship and RE by a wide range of stakeholders to inform future developments and ensure a clear biblical underpinning for the school values.
- To establish a coherent RE policy and long-term plan to ensure greater consistency and increase depth.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

The Parable of the Lost Sheep is central to the vision and is visible throughout the school. This provides the theological underpinning to the vision. Inspired by this, all school leaders work diligently so pupils and adults can flourish and live well together. This vision supports the development of pupil leadership roles. Pupils value the responsibilities during their week as Head Girl/Boy. Relationships are firmly rooted in the vision, summarised as 'Inspire, Believe, Achieve'. Staff stated: 'you never feel any pressure or silly for asking anything. It feels like a family here'. The behaviour policy is under review, initial drafts include forgiveness and restoration. Pupils are happy at school and readily apologise. They talk about everyone being beautiful in God's eyes.

The vision is demonstrated in the school's drive for inclusion, articulated by staff as 'no hand left unheld'. Parents observed adjustments made to support anxious children in coming into school. Pupils who find managing their feelings difficult are well supported to acquire social skills. This approach has resulted in a reduction in fixed term exclusions and pupils' being successfully integrated following transfers from other settings. The school is addressing persistent absence, which is higher than national averages. Pupils who join the school settle quickly because adults and children welcome them. One pupil said, 'God welcomes you into his kingdom whoever you are'.

Rapid improvement in quality of teaching and learning has enabled opportunities for all to flourish. For instance reading, writing, maths combined in Year 6 has increased from 37% in 2017 to 59% in 2018, only 4% lower than national comparisons. The curriculum is broad and gives a range of opportunities inside and outside school, including in Forest School. Year 6 pupils were studying Ancient Greeks in costume during the inspection. Consistent with the drive for all to flourish, pupil achievements across school life are celebrated. Pupils can enter for Artist of the Month; staff review entries and certificates are awarded during celebration worship. All staff are empowered to flourish through professional development opportunities. For instance, the special needs co-ordinator has achieved a nationally recognised qualification.

Sir Henry Fermor school has strong links with community groups. Inclusion is evident in the way the school serves the local refuge and Traveller communities. The parish church supports the school in a range of ways, including by unpacking themes from the Understanding Christianity resource every Monday. The church ran an engaging 'Big Bible week', which further developed biblical understanding. The vicar is very active in school and prays regularly with the headteacher. This engagement is valued by the school community and has ensured practices such as Christian Mindfulness are introduced. The school receives active support from the Trust. This includes shared training and on-going support for school leaders in self-evaluation. The school is engaged in charitable giving. Such as collecting Food Bank donations and raising money for a juvenile arthritis charity, this has links to a child in school. Pupils said they do this because 'we should be kind and generous like God'. The recent visit of the African Children's Choir gave the opportunity to learn about Christians around the world and engage with diversity.

Collective worship is a daily opportunity to better understand the Christian faith, other people and inclusivity. One pupil said, 'If you let God into your life, then it is going to be lit up'. It is thoroughly planned giving opportunities to explore Bible stories and reflect on a wide range of national themed events, such as Anti-Bullying week. Pupils are very involved in planning and leading collective worship, particularly monthly House Group collective worship. During the inspection these opportunities considered kindness through either the Parable of the Good Samaritan or the Lost Sheep. Pupils responded thoughtfully in discussions. Year 6 recognise that leading helps develop public speaking skills and confidence. Collective worship reflects key Anglican features of worship. One pupil said 'the candle is lit to show that God is the light of the world. He is with us.' Leaders responded quickly when factual errors in the collective worship policy were identified during the inspection. Currently there are insufficient, ongoing opportunities to monitor and evaluate the impact of collective worship. Each class has an identified value which provides the basis for their class led collective worship during the year. These are also expanded on in newsletters to parents. Pupils confidently name their current class value these are underpinned by a relevant Bible verse chosen by the pupils at the start of the year. However, the understanding of this biblical foundation is not securely embedded.

Prayer is a key feature of both collective worship and the school day. Pupils understand the importance of prayer, saying 'prayer can help people'. Many do not appreciate these opportunities are invitational. The dedicated Christian leadership of the headteacher and the prayer opportunities offered enable staff to feel greatly valued and supported.

They see these actions as bringing the vision to life. Pupils appreciate the chance to pray and give thanks before they go home. Currently some RE displays and reflection areas are conflated thus reducing clarity of purpose. The collective worship and RE subject leader has developed an expectations document that rightly identifies the need for a clear distinction between these spaces. This helps support the academic integrity of RE and gives clear opportunities for spiritual development. Despite a range of opportunities for spiritual development within school life, these are not articulated clearly. This is, in part, due to fact that the school's definition of spiritual development has not been agreed and shared.

RE supports the understanding of the vision through learning about the Parable of the Lost Sheep. Pupils value the variety in RE, for instance using an experiential approach to learning. Pupils' learn about five world faiths. They can talk knowledgeably and respectfully about their learning, including Year 1 talking about Shabbat. Parents comment on how their own faith is valued and celebrated in RE. For example, the Reception class shared one child's experience of Divali. The leader used a staff subject survey to identify targeted support needs. Training is prioritised, particularly for the new subject leader in relation to Understanding Christianity. Despite this, the purpose of some key documentation is unclear in the RE policy. For instance, there is no reference to which syllabus is used. This is impacting negatively on curriculum coherence and subject knowledge. In all other areas the Church of England Statement of Entitlement, 2016 is met. The school prioritises RE shown in high quality presentation, appropriate curriculum time and effective RE displays which reflect recent learning.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

RE results are in-line with literacy expectations including outcomes for groups vulnerable to underachievement. Some pupils with lower written literacy skills are achieving more highly in RE due to the discursive nature of the subject. Pupils are making good progress. However not all pupils are clear on how well they are doing in RE which consequently slows progress. Tasks often offer challenge. Year 5 books demonstrate how comparative skills encourage learning about core values in Sikhism. The subject leader is growing in confidence and is providing good support for her colleagues in developing a range of activities and approaches to support quality RE teaching.

Headteacher	Mrs Sacha Strand
Inspector's name and number	Mrs Susan Thompson 714