



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Danehill Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School

School Lane
Danehill
Haywards Heath
RH11 7JB

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Chichester

Local authority: East Sussex

Dates of inspection: 24 March 2015

Date of last inspection: 14 May 2009

School's unique reference number: 114499

Headteacher: Brad Falconer

Inspector's name and number: Connie Hughes 765

School context

Danehill CE Primary is a rural school with four mixed age classes. There are currently 95 pupils on role. Pupils are mainly white British and live in relatively advantaged economic circumstances. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is broadly in line with the national average. The headteacher has been in post since September 2014. There have been significant staff changes in recent months due to professional promotion and changes in personal circumstances.

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

- Explicit Christian values, understood and applied by all pupils, staff and governors underpin the ethos of the school.
- Engaging, inspiring and reflective collective worship lies at the heart of the Christian life of the school.
- Religious education contributes strongly to learners' understanding of Christianity, the Bible, world faiths and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The focussed leadership of the headteacher, strongly supported by the governors, based on distinctively Christian values meets the needs of all learners and their families.

Areas to improve

- Celebrate more fully the Christian distinctiveness through enhanced reflection areas within the classroom and the planned outdoor spiritual garden.
- Provide structured learning experiences for pupils to plan, engage and deliver a greater richness to the prayer life of the school.
- To raise the quality of teaching and provide greater challenge in pupils' learning, ensure all class teachers consistently apply differentiated learning experiences in religious education.
- Through governing body monitoring, establish evaluation strategies to secure evidence of the distinctiveness and effectiveness of Danehill as a church school.

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

The pupils are proactive ambassadors for the schools' distinctive Christian ethos. This was clearly explained by a pupil in Key Stage 2 who said that, "Jesus always follows these values, He told us to love others and to follow them because we have to be good at learning".

Democratically discussed and voted upon by the pupils and governors, eight Christian and moral values, are now central to the daily life of the school. These include respect, forgiveness, enjoyment and perseverance, and impact strongly on pupils' relationships, behaviour and attitudes to learning. The School Council stated, "we use them in class and as a focus in assemblies." An inspiring portfolio of photographs, Christian symbols and vibrant corridor displays reflect and celebrate the breadth of spiritual, social, moral and cultural (SMSC) learning that pupils experience. For example, pupils showed enjoyment and understanding when they learnt about Jewish and Christian festivals at Harvest time. Local schools partnerships enable all pupils to apply their Christian values and teamwork when accessing a range of sport, music, dance and drama. Established links with the church are central to the SMSC life of the school community. Through regular family attendance for Christian festivals, the Youth Club and Messy Church, past and present pupils stay in touch and build lasting friendships. Pupils identify a range of charitable events, which develop their understanding of local, national and global issues. These include collections made after the Nativity performances and the choir and orchestra performing at a local Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony in support of a specialist children's ward in the local hospital. Plans are in place to link with a Ghanaian education charity to develop more awareness of a diverse society.

Religious education (RE) is a core subject, led and taught by an experienced specialist teacher and increasingly by class teachers. All teachers now undertake moderation of RE, measuring pupils' knowledge, understanding and responses to Christianity and world faiths, in line with national standards. There is inconsistency in the approach to differentiated learning in RE across the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship has a significant impact on the spiritual life of the school and community. A recently updated and comprehensive worship policy celebrates the teachings of Christ and the traditions and beliefs of the Church of England. Termly planning, content and structure for worship, based on core Christian values and significant events in the church calendar are explored in relation to pupils' everyday lives. Structured timetabling identifies the vicar, parish youth worker and the teaching team gives a wide range of styles that lead weekly acts of worship on the agreed themes. A range of pertinent resources, including the primary based Christian "Values for Life" teaching materials provide spiritual guidance". All pupils are developing their understanding of the Trinity through a pattern of liturgical responses during worship. Pupils in Year Six experience the Eucharist service, using appropriate resources from All Saint's Church and the school. Biblical teaching, music, drama and song are central to their worship, including pupils' musical talents used on entry and exit to Friday services. Observing whole school worship, led by the vicar, on the events of Easter week, entitled "being brave", it was apparent pupils were fully engaged and participating in the delivery of the message. Singing was inspiring and emotive. Prayer was exceptional, with three pupils, of varying ages, chosen from many volunteers, leading prayers from their hearts including, "thank you for Jesus, for His sacrifice for us to help us learn." Weekly Thursday worship, led by pupils is inclusive of the wider school community. These weekly acts of worship has seen improvement in the quality of presentations, pupil self-confidence and an increase in family attendance. Visitors to the school comment on good pupil behaviour and attitudes to worship. Parents see a strong partnership between the school and the church; the headteacher is "passionate in his care for the children" and the vicar "leads by example, children are encouraged by his teaching and his warmth". Pupils, staff and parents, carry out evaluations of worship, collated by the headteacher to inform future planning, are shared on a 'What do you think of worship?' display board. Faith reflection areas and a focus on engaging in and writing prayers for the recently introduced prayer boxes needs establishing in all classrooms to further enhance the school's Christian distinctiveness.

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

The school's distinctive Christian ethos is clearly articulated and celebrated on the school website. The headteacher, on appointment, engaged the school and community in identifying and instigating core Christian values that have strengthened the church school foundation. These values are now well established and contribute to pupil's positive attitudes to learning and personal interactions. One teacher stated, and echoed by the staff team, that "Christian values permeate through every aspect of school with children and staff supportive of each other". The headteacher, with the governing body, are highly effective in evaluating and monitoring strategic whole school improvements. The School Development Plan puts a significant emphasis on spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision as a key priority, relating directly to the schools Christian ethos, nurturing every child to succeed. Foundation governors are committed to promoting the school's Christian ethos. Through a recently formed sub-committee of the governing body they are beginning to monitor the impact of the school's Christian ethos and effectiveness on raising all pupils learning outcomes in a more systematic way. An effective special education needs co-ordinator works closely with the leadership and teaching team to plan intervention strategies, provide inclusive learning experiences and raise achievement of vulnerable pupils.

Parents state "communication is good". Regular newsletters, the updated school website, and open meetings have positively engaged parents in school improvement priorities. School and church based worship, celebration assemblies, curriculum, extra-curricular activities and charitable events continue to build on the established strong community relationships and Christian foundation of the school. Professional partnership and liaison with the diocese, the church community and for example, the local visiting Bible Explorers group, strengthens the knowledge and skills of all staff, in delivering effective church school leadership, religious education and worship provision. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship. Parents speak highly of a positive Christian foundation, supporting the well-being of their children, identifying "character and kindness, as well as success", as the principles of the school.

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