

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Copythorne Church of England Infant School

Romsey Road,
Copythorne,
Southampton.
SO40 2PB

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Winchester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Hampshire
Name of federation	The Oaks Learning Federation
Date of inspection	3 March 2017
Date of last inspection	9 February 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Infant 116282
Executive Headteacher	Tina Daniel
Inspector's name and number	Lorraine Pugh 819

School context

Copythorne is a smaller than average rural infant school with 82 children. Children come from a predominantly White British background and many live outside of the school's catchment area. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals and the pupil premium grant is below average. The number receiving extra support for special educational needs is above average at 10%. The school is one of the three Church infant schools that form the Oaks Church of England Learning Federation. Each school has its own Head of Learning and an Executive Headteacher, who has been in post since 2010, leads the whole federation.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Copythorne voluntary controlled Infant School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- The Christian ethos of the school, in which all children are highly valued, has resulted in excellent standards of personal development, academic achievement and well-being.
- The school has established strong links between its 'FOREST' Christian values, Religious Education (RE) and Worship, each having Jesus and the Bible as a central focus.
- The strong commitment, high expectations and clear vision of the school's leadership are very effective in ensuring the school's continued development as a distinctively Christian school.

Areas to improve

- Allow the children to be more involved in the leadership, planning and evaluation of worship so they increase their ownership of this special time in the school day.
- Increase the number of opportunities for children to have first-hand experiences in order to enable them to further their knowledge of different faiths, including their similarities to and differences from Christianity

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

Copythorne Infant school is an outstanding Church school because its core Christian FOREST values are explicit, deeply embedded and well understood. They are woven through Religious Education (RE), collective worship and general school life. Individualised care ensures all children are nurtured and supported with their academic and emotional development and this results in happy, confident children who are excited to come to school. All members of the community are able to confidently explain why the school's Christian values are important and adults are able to describe the positive effect they have on children's learning and behaviour. Each child is viewed as unique and special. They are very well supported when difficult situations arise and parents say children with significant needs are welcomed, supported and loved. This loving and safe Christian environment allows all children to succeed and this contributes to their desire to be the best they can be. Academic standards are above the national age expectations and children make good progress from their individual starting points. Children are able to link their behaviour and experiences to the FOREST values. For example, they know that not giving up in lessons or doing their best to be a good friend shows 'endurance'. They know that looking after the New Forest and respecting the lovely books in the school library is 'stewardship'. Children's behaviour within school is of the highest standard. They are polite and respectful to each other and to the adults looking after them. When behaviour needs support this is done firmly but gently and this gives children time to learn from their mistakes. For example, children are asked whether they need a moment to re consider their choices and are invited to suggest a better way of doing things. Children and adults say that the school is a place where they are listened to and where worries are dealt with quickly. Children say that they love their school and are happy to explain how the adults look after them and how important their friendships are. Adults in the school have a shared understanding of spirituality and this is successfully supporting children's spiritual development. There are planned opportunities for spiritual experiences as well as times to stop, listen, watch and reflect. For example, hearing the rain clattering on the rooftop. This is giving children an awareness of themselves and the world around them. The attractive thatched playground hut called the 'Peaceful Place' and class reflection tables are well used by the children for prayer, reflection and quiet thought. The children have a growing knowledge of other faiths and they can clearly explain why everybody should be treated with respect, regardless of differences in faith or culture. The school is aware that additional first hand experiences of other faiths and cultures are needed to support children's awareness of diversity. Children support a range of charities both locally and nationally. The local support helps children to experience the impact of their charitable work, for example, the raising of funds for a defibrillator for a locally known family. RE is well organised within the school and regular monitoring ensures it remains of the highest quality. Some RE activities do not include writing in books so learning evidence is collected in comprehensive whole class RE books, annotated with learning statements from the children. Children are confident when discussing the 'Big Questions'. They listen to each other and are respectful to those holding different opinions to their own. Many have realised that there are sometimes many correct answers to the same question and they are willing to stand alone to justify their opinion rather than go with the majority.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.

Collective worship is outstanding with children describing it as a time when they gather together to learn about Bible stories, the work of Jesus and how his teaching can be applied to their own lives. Anglican practice is demonstrated with the lighting of the candle and a Christian greeting to each other. Children clearly explain how the light from the candle shows that Jesus is the light of the world and that this guides them in their kind thoughts and behaviour. They have an extensive knowledge of Bible stories and this was shown in an RE lesson where they drew on their knowledge of a number of Bible stories to answer questions. The FOREST values are featured in engaging mosaic displays and they form an integral part of collective worship. Biblical quotes are clearly displayed next to each value, making their Christian foundation explicit. Children are active participants in worship and there is obvious enjoyment as they join in the action songs and volunteer their thoughts. Their understanding is evident and this is because worship leaders deliver worship in an age appropriate way. For example, the children link endurance to the character, 'Mr Never Give Up' whose saying is, 'If you can't get over it, you can't get under it, you have to go through it'. Children explain that if you practice something you get better at it. There are many places within the school building and grounds for quiet personal prayer and reflection. Each classroom has a reflection table, which includes a prayer tree with many personal prayers written by children. Children know that prayer is open to everyone and that they can pray anywhere as God is always listening. Worship is well planned through the Christian year so as well as the FOREST values the children also celebrate Christian festivals. A range of worship leaders allow the children to receive a rich variety of worship styles. Local church members have joined together to establish an 'Open The Book' team and the children really enjoy learning about the Bible from their dramatized storytelling. Children's views on worship are collected and many of their ideas are included within the provision. An increased role for children in planning, leading and evaluating worship is needed to further their ownership of this important part of the school day. Spiritual development is nurtured and children are able to explore and value the world around them. For example, they excitedly rush into school to check on the progress of the developing tadpoles and the incubated chickens. The school vicar is a very active supporter of the school and this includes his established children's meditation sessions, which are effectively supporting children's ability to be more reflective and calm. The church is next to the school, accessed with a short walk across the adjoining field, and children are regular visitors. They say that they like going to church to worship and also to learn about all the things in the church and what they mean. Systems are in place for worship to be monitored and this includes the involvement of governors. Information from this monitoring is used for future worship development.

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

The school has made good progress since the last inspection and development points have been addressed. The school's leadership constantly looks for opportunities to further its Christian distinctiveness. This is shown by the Executive Headteacher's involvement in a church led research project looking at future Church School Leadership. It has also received a request by the Diocese to share its vicar led meditation initiative with other schools. The school's leadership supports local needs, for example, its support for the recently opened 'Forest school' pre school which uses the school's facilities when necessary. The Executive Headteacher and Head of Learning work closely together to ensure that all developments keep children as their major focus and central to all decisions. The FOREST values are meaningful to the emotional, spiritual and academic development of the children at Copythorne. All three schools in the Oaks Federation have the same core values and this ensures a shared understanding when all of the federation schools' children and staff get together. Regular questionnaires are used to involve parents in the school's development. 100% of parents reported their awareness of the school's status as a Church school and 94% reported good links and communication. Parents greatly appreciate the school's work. For example, 'The school has started both my children's educational journey in a wonderful way' and 'The school gives individualised, nurturing support and they are passionate about the children and their learning'. The Governing body works across the three schools of the federation. They are knowledgeable and focused, having a good understanding of what it means to be a church school. Their school visits are well structured with a sense of purpose and resulting actions are included within the leadership development plans. Past actions have been addressed, for example, a redesigned school badge reflecting the corporate image of the school federation but reflecting the uniqueness of each having individual school, with each an embroidered image of each school's church. Governors challenge and support the school. Good relationships are shown by teachers inviting governor feedback to support school improvement. RE and worship are well planned by the Head of Learning and regular monitoring ensures that the school continues to develop its practice. Excellent resources support the knowledgeable teaching. RE assessment is meaningful with children's understanding supported or extended when necessary. Strong links exist with the local church as well as other church organisations. The teachers value the advice given by the school vicar who is a valued member of the governing body and regular school visitor. Children say, 'I love it when Rev. John brings his friends to tell us a Bible story', referring to the 'Open the Book' team. Parents value the school and feel that its distinctive Christian ethos allows children to explore matters of faith and belief openly, in an environment that is safe and respectful. Parents agree that the children show empathy for each other with the acceptance of difference.

The school meets the statutory guidance for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report March 2017 Copythorne CE VC Infant School, Copythorne, Hampshire. SO40 2PB