

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Sedlescombe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Brede Lane
Sedlescombe
East Sussex
TN33 0RQ

Diocese: Chichester

Local authority: East Sussex
Dates of inspection: 23 March 2012
Date of last inspection: December 2008
School's unique reference number: 114522
Headteacher: Marian Ham
Inspector's name and number: Allison Goodfellow 504

School context

The current school building opened in September 1980. The attractive building comprises seven large classrooms, all with access to outdoor working areas. There is a well resourced Special Needs room and two group teaching rooms.

The outstanding grounds include an all-weather surface, a play ship, climbing equipment, an outdoor stage, a wild garden, a quiet garden and an outdoor heated swimming pool. Currently a yurt is under construction.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Sedlescombe Primary School as a Church of England school are Outstanding

There is a Christian ethos of care that is reflected in all areas of school life. The high quality of leadership and management provided by the headteacher, leadership team and governors contributes strongly to the success of the school. The staff team, with good support from the parish church and clergy, provide a highly relevant and appropriate Christian education for all the pupils. The school grounds are outstanding and make a very positive contribution to the spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of the pupils. As a result, the school readily meets the intellectual, emotional and spiritual needs of each pupil.

Established strengths

- The strong Christian vision of the headteacher, leadership team and governors and their commitment to a culture of on-going improvement as a church school
- The Christian ethos of the school in which all pupils are valued and encouraged to succeed
- The close, positive links between the school and local churches

Focus for development

- Embed the use of assessment in R.E. in every class

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

High quality displays, outstanding grounds and warm relationships work together to enhance the strong spiritual ethos that permeates the school, enabling all to achieve well and nurture their individual gifts, regardless of their ability. Children are seen as special because they are special to God; their care, safety and well-being are paramount. Consequently, well integrated programmes of study, involving specialist teachers, support staff and advice from the agencies that surround the school, are in place thus ensuring that children with additional needs receive targeted support. The needs of the more able children are identified and supported through differentiated teaching and, when opportunities arise, at master classes provided by the Local Authority and the local network of cluster schools. Good transition and

the use of Year 6 'buddies' enable children to settle quickly into school and readily begin their learning journey. There is a strong pupil voice. Pupils are regularly consulted and their views valued and often acted upon. As a result, children develop into confident individuals willing and able to contribute to school life.

The children have a very clear understanding of right and wrong; their behaviour is excellent. They have a good knowledge of global communities and fundraise regularly for local and international charities. This has developed the children's understanding of less privileged and more diverse parts of the United Kingdom and the world.

Extensive, attractive, well-resourced grounds surround the school. These have the potential to provide unlimited opportunities for awe and wonder. The provision of the Monet Room, a Quiet Room, is outstanding; the children know it is a space for peace and prayer and recognise the special place it has at the heart of the school. Non-denominational Religious Education (RE) makes a strong contribution to the school's Christian ethos and children's spiritual development but the school recognises that, currently, the assessment of RE is not used consistently in every year group.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective Worship is an important part of school life which strongly supports the Christian character of the school and the children's spiritual development. Artefacts to support worship include a large folding screen completely covered with a picture of a woodland path – 'the path through life' - a table upon which is placed a cross, flowers and a Bible; beside this stands a large candle. The children love this special place and are keen to show it to visitors. Worship is carefully planned. Most weekly themes are linked to Christian values. Many themes are followed up in personal, social and health education (PHSEE) lessons and religious education (RE) and form part of prayers during the day. A member of staff reported, 'Worship is not separate, it is integral to conversations, relationships, Circle Time and in the classroom'. The children value the opportunity to deepen their understanding within the variety of worship offered to them and are able to describe ways in which worship has enabled them to make more mature decisions - about friendship issues for example - and to share these with trusted adults in school and at home.

Thoughtful, carefully evaluated records of worship are maintained. The children evaluate worship through discussions and questionnaires. Their views are respected and their ideas are incorporated into the worship programme. The children particularly enjoy worship when other children are involved – in drama, readings, prayers and by contributing musically. The majority of children respond positively, listen attentively, sing enthusiastically and join in prayers and reflection with sensitivity. The children are developing a range of prayers, affirmations and responses from the Anglican tradition.

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

The impressive level of leadership and management provided by the headteacher, leadership team and governing body contributes significantly to the success of the school. All have a clear, Christian vision for school development and have demonstrated this through the creation of a vibrant learning environment based on Christian values, which is evident to all who visit or attend the school.

Robust and accurate self-evaluation ensures that governors know the school well. The introduction of a creative curriculum and on-going changes to assessment across the curriculum has strengthened these areas.

Links with local churches and the community are strong and positive. The children already know the recently arrived parish priest and are familiar with the nearby church, which is used at least termly for special, child-focused worship and as a resource for learning in RE. Leaders of worship include clergy, members of the parish team, visitors from other local churches and from a variety of organisations. The children enjoy this diversity and respond well to it.

The school roll has risen as a result of informed, parental choice; parents are actively seeking a church school for their children and are very keen to support aspects of the school's work. Parents report that they love the school and feel it is very special because it is a church school and comment that it has a unique quality that enables all children to flourish. They particularly value the ease of access to teachers and the headteacher. 'This is a school that listens', said one parent.

Leadership is strategic and forward-looking; a commitment to professional development and succession planning ensures that the staff team is stable and future staffing needs are addressed in good time.

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