

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Stelling Minnis Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	
Bossingham Road, Stelling Minnis, Canterbury, Kent. CT4 6DU	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	Canterbury
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Kent
Date of inspection	14 November 2017
Date of last inspection	14 November 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 118681
Headteacher	John Gray
Inspector's name and number	Melanie Williams 911

### School context

Stelling Minnis is a small, rural primary school of 101 pupils drawn from local villages and the surrounding area. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs or with English as an additional language is below the national average. The school is arranged in four mixed-age classes. The headteacher has been in post for eleven years. An Ofsted inspection in March 2017 judged the school as good. It is part of a collaboration of eight local schools and has close links with the parish churches of St Mary's, Stelling Minnis and St Peter and St Paul, Upper Hardres.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Stelling Minnis as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Leaders consistently and confidently articulate, live out and promote the long-established Christian vision and values of the school. These are deeply embedded and benefit the whole community.
- Pupils flourish through the provision of a rich and extended curriculum that supports their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development.
- Pupils are capable and enthusiastic leaders of worship. Their observation and monitoring of worship has led to a highly inclusive, creative approach that engages learners.

### Areas to improve

- Develop the outdoor environment to provide additional settings for spiritual reflection.
- Develop the curriculum to improve pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith.

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

The school values of friendship, love, trust, peace, wisdom and forgiveness are well established and deeply embedded in the life of the school. Since the previous denominational inspection, the values have been linked to Bible stories which are clearly set out on the school website and displayed around the school. Pupils have a sound understanding of these stories and can explain how they relate to their own lives. The consistent application and modelling of these values has promoted excellent relationships and trust throughout the community. Consequently, pupils learn in a positive atmosphere that supports strong progress and achievement. Pupils that have attended the school for the whole of their primary education make outstanding progress. Those that have joined later make rapid progress from their entry points. The school, in its ambition to secure the best outcomes for pupils, has been successful in reducing persistent pupil absence. Attendance rates are now very high. Behaviour is excellent with very few recorded incidents and no exclusions for many years. Pupils readily take on responsibility and exhibit inclusive leadership of other children. They have a clear sense of right and wrong and talk freely about how the school values motivate them to be kind and caring to one another.

The school has set out clear aims for pupils' spiritual development in its policies. They are given many opportunities to develop spiritually by reflecting on their beliefs, values and relationships in the context of daily classwork and experiences. Staff provide a safe environment in which pupils can confidently explore their views. Learners develop their ideas through talking, writing, art, drama and practical action such as fundraising for charities. Learning about wisdom encourages pupils to persevere in their studies and to make considered decisions. The school is in the early stages of developing an area of the grounds as a place for quiet reflection.

The school sets out to achieve the absolute best for all its pupils in an enjoyable, fun, loving and creative environment. To this end, the school provides an excellent broad curriculum to support pupils' SMSC development. Forest school, extra-curricular clubs, involvement in the local community and an annual residential trip contribute well to pupils' personal development. Pupils report that they enjoy their work and the opportunities and responsibilities they are given. Learners report that any problems are speedily resolved as everyone understands the school values of love, friendship and forgiveness. The atmosphere around the school is calm and harmonious. Parents comment on how well pupils show care and support for one another. Pupils can point to occasions at home and at school where forgiving their friends and siblings has helped to restore relationships. Another pupil spoke of an occasion where mutual trust and wisdom were needed to solve a problem.

The school is successful in providing a global dimension to the curriculum in which pupils learn about other faiths and cultures through religious education (RE), annual multi-cultural topics and charity work. Wherever possible, the school draws on its own families to expand pupils' experience of other cultures. Pupils have some understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith but the school does not sufficiently develop this in the curriculum. The school has recently adopted the new 'Understanding Christianity' resources for RE. Older pupils are challenged by questions such as 'Was Jesus the Messiah?' This involves them in an exploration of Biblical text and consideration of the views of different major religions. Younger children's spiritual development is supported in RE through creative approaches to storytelling. The use of music and candles helps to establish a sense of awe and wonder with high pupil engagement. In response to a recommendation from the previous denominational inspection, pupils are well supported in the understanding and use of specific religious vocabulary.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

Collective worship is central to the daily life of the school and has played a crucial part in establishing shared values in the school community. Pupils readily identify how worship influences their thinking and relationships. One pupil said, 'Worship is a peaceful time. Jesus calmed the storm on the lake. We should think before we speak, to keep the peace'. Staff appreciate a time in the day for stillness and reflection. All pupils and staff attend worship and are given frequent opportunities to lead and to take part. This has led to a highly inclusive atmosphere where everyone is valued. Collective worship is based on Diocesan plans and adapted to include regular attention to the school values. Stories from the Bible are used to illustrate values. One pupil recalled the story of The Prodigal Son as an example of how God loves and forgives people. A calendar, displayed in the hall, helps pupils to remember the pattern of the church year. Pupils experience Anglican traditions of worship such as the use of well-known prayers, lighting candles and singing Christian songs. They include these features when they plan worship. Themes include local, national and global issues. Pupils have shown considerable interest, empathy and leadership in their actions to support charities and concerns. An example of this is when pupils took part in a sleepover in the church to support a project for homeless people. Staff members have consistently modelled prayer in worship. Consequently, pupils freely offer spontaneous prayers when invited to do so. Pupils understand that there are different kinds of prayer such as saying sorry and giving thanks and praise. They turn to prayer in times of need such as sitting tests or when people are ill. Governors pray at the start of meetings and there is a school prayer meeting once a fortnight.

Local church members set up a prayer room during the school's RE and reflection week which is well used. As a result of ongoing teaching, pupils have a good knowledge of the life and person of Jesus. Some learners can talk about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit making a comparison to ice, water and vapour being different versions of the same thing. However, this is not routinely included in worship. Many pupils are members of the worship team and, with minimal staff input, confidently plan and lead worship each week. Pupils invite other learners to take part in aspects of worship such as drama, lighting the candle or saying prayers. In addition, all classes lead worship several times each year. Local church members and visitors from other Christian organisations help to provide a variety of approaches to worship. Local churches and occasional visits to Canterbury Cathedral offer some variety in setting. Parents are invited to worship on special occasions and the whole community shares a simple meal once a year to reflect on The Last Supper. Staff, governors and pupils regularly monitor worship to ensure good provision. Pupils' observations have had significant impact, bringing about wider inclusion and more opportunities for drama in worship.

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

The leadership team is strongly committed to the Christian vision and values of the school. They consistently model these values in all their work and share them with parents through conversations, communications and via the website. Leaders readily identify the benefits of this established ethos for learners and on how the school is central to the cohesion of the whole community. The school has a well-developed system of self-evaluation and monitoring that enables all members of the community to contribute to ongoing improvement plans. The school plan includes data on how well pupils are progressing through the year, supporting governors in holding the school to account. The school has a detailed understanding of pupil performance and is thorough in identifying and addressing the needs of all its learners. Pupil attainment over time meets or exceeds national expectations. Leaders welcome advice from beyond the school to establish best practice. A rigorous, annual programme of monitoring ensures an ongoing focus on standards and the ethos of the school. This has identified further ways of improving teaching and learning and secured a climate in which everyone is committed to achieving the very best outcomes for all learners. For example, the school has worked closely with an advisor and invested in new resources to develop pupils' mathematical reasoning and mastery of key skills. The impact of these measures can be demonstrated by very strong progress data for all groups.

Parents arrange events that draw the community together. They raise significant funds for resources that benefit the school. Close links with both local parish churches bring shared resources and mutual support. Church members lead school worship and the school promotes church projects and events such as 'Messy Church'. This is well attended by families in the school. The school is actively involved with a range of other organisations. This has improved understanding of different communities and enriched the school and its partners. Staff and governors make good use of Diocesan training and advice to strengthen its leadership of this church school. Governance is strong and forward thinking in its drive to retain and build on the long established Christian vision for the school. Two members of staff have completed the National Professional Qualification for Senior Leaders, bringing additional strength to the leadership team. The headteacher currently leads both collective worship and RE. He ensures that these retain a high profile in the school and that provision for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements. Staff are receiving training for the new Understanding Christianity resources for RE. Open dialogue between staff and regular progress reviews are contributing to the successful introduction of this scheme.

SIAMS report November 2017 Stelling Minnis Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Kent CT4 6DU