

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Farncombe Church of England VC Infant School	
Address	Grays Road, Farncombe, Godalming, GU7 3LT
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	
Overall grade	Excellent
The impact of collective worship	Excellent

School's vision
<p>'Let all you do be done in love' is our guiding vision for our speech, deeds and thoughts. This enables us to create a nurturing and inspiring environment in which everyone can have life in all its fullness.</p> <p>Farncombe Church of England Infant School: Inspiration, Imagination, Individuality</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The accessible and deeply rooted vision has an extensive impact on all aspects of the school. This enriches everyone, with love acting as a lens through which the school shapes all its work. • A responsive and strategic approach to learning and curriculum development is consciously equipping pupils for the future. • This school prioritises the perspective of the individual child which is fostering and enabling the wellbeing of all. • Deeply meaningful collective worship pervades school life and is underpinned by transformational pupil leadership. This enriches the whole school community and is highly valued by children and their families. • Religious education (RE) is carefully planned and is contributing significantly to pupils' increasing understanding of diversity and difference.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to enrich the work of other church schools by sharing your innovative and best practice. • Consolidate the school definition of spiritual development to make it more accessible and widely used.

Inspection findings

After a thorough review of the school's vision, time has been taken to ensure it is clearly understood and consistently applied. It is recited and explored each day accompanied by helpful actions. Pupils refer to it in their learning and social time, with one rightly explaining that all the values flow from this emphasis on love. The annual themed vision day further embeds and applies the vision. It provides priority time for all to reflect on its meaning for them and the school.

The six biblically derived values that flow from the vision are encountered throughout school procedures and policy. Each has dedicated elected pupil champions. They see these responsibilities as a privilege and eagerly embrace their contribution to the school. This is building pupil confidence, which parents recognize in discussions that take place at home.

The established and cohesive staff team work together in a carousel approach to teaching which particularly supports the youngest children. These familiar relationships result in smooth transitions through the school. Pupils are creatively grouped to respond to different stages of development. Governors and leaders work together making bold decisions which quickly meets emerging needs. They creatively enable those who are disadvantaged to confidently benefit from all aspects of the learning environment. All children joining the school enjoy a new beginning. Any prior perceptions pupils may bring of one another are gently but clearly challenged. This contributes to the widely recognised community emphasis of the school.

Experiences during the previous pandemic have cemented the deep sense of teamwork and shared responsibility. Families with younger siblings now in the setting recount the debt of gratitude they feel. Staff demonstrated their care by walking to stand outside the home of every child in the school, to wave and show pieces of their work. Specialist support through play therapy, bereavement counselling and speech and language expertise are bringing lasting benefits. In all planning, governors consider the needs and impact on staff. Proposed new initiatives are carefully trialled and explored. Leaders ensure that all methods are shaped for the benefit of the learning community.

With limited local ethnic diversity, there is proactive provision to further pupil understanding. This includes reading materials and experiences which immerse everyone in different cultures and perspectives. Alongside this, there is a conscious celebration of the twelve languages spoken across the school community. There is rarely mention of difference but instead delight in enjoying diversity. All relish participating in these experiences, from staff sharing their Irish heritage to sampling Bollywood dancing.

As members of a local learning partnership, the school both contributes and benefits from working with trainee teachers. Staff effectively lead in different subject areas. Pupils talk appreciatively about enjoying visitors coming into their school to teach them. Senior leaders actively support colleagues in other settings. They share their well-established breadth of expertise and insight into leadership in church schools. Families, governors, and staff see it as a privilege to be part of this community.

Spiritual development is a priority for staff and governors. Pupils are enriched and express their ideas across the three dimensions that the school identifies. This is expressed as upwards, outwards, and inwards. Parents can see clear examples of this growth, but some are not as familiar with the school definition. Families from various worldviews appreciate the sensitivity of the different approaches used. They acknowledge the openness and enthusiasm it instills in their children.



Advocacy informs curriculum development. Examples in each year mean pupils recognise that they have a voice and that their views can be heard. This has included writing letters to the prime minister and to the King. This naturally spills over into worship and social action. All contribute to the many expressions of charitable support. Pupils select areas of work, planning events, poster designing and frequent baking. The well used central prayer area, with its fortnightly changing theme, is a place where reflection partners with action. Here waste plastic was reshaped into artwork. Staff were petitioned as learning explored the 'Tearfund' rubbish campaign. Pupils wished to act based on their learning, which resulted in a child led initiative for soft plastics recycling.

Forest school approaches are integral to the school. Pupils take ownership of their learning, and adults are described as being 'on tap, not on top'. Outdoor experiences all year round helps everyone learn more about the gifts of each season. The different setting also results in increased communication and confidence. Here mistakes can be made without issue. All are able to relax and thrive in this setting.

Collective worship takes different forms. It is clearly defined by the school as whenever they gather together to learn about and praise God. This flows through all aspects of the community. Routines are carefully considered and thoughtfully executed, recognising and responding to the individual needs of children. Prayers take place daily in each class. Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) themes are drawn out from the weekly focus on emotional and moral development. Worship also includes demonstration of a weekly playground game. Times in the church calendar are marked and celebrated in different ways, including the dedicated 'Easter pause day'. This reflects the high value placed across the school on opportunities for reflection. All share responsibility, with staff participating and leading alongside the pupil monitors. From the time of joining the school, all desire to apply and take this leadership role. These pupils provide guidance and direction to the senior staff in all aspects of collective worship. There is regular use of the local church building for special services and the exceptionally popular weekly club. This reflects the close and mutually enriching relationship that exists.

RE is enjoyed by all. Different worldviews are encountered and there is an appreciation of the variety of learning experiences. A recent live link to a Jewish community enabled an exploration of questions about faith in everyday life. All talk enthusiastically about the way that RE is enabling global citizenship. Staff training is shared effectively to equip all to deliver the forthcoming changes in the syllabus. Pupils value being able to disagree well about various worldviews, whether at school or at home with older siblings and parents.

The school was accurately described by one staff member as being like an orchestra. They rightly explained that each child is supported to play their own individual instrument, but that everyone together makes a beautiful harmony.



Information			
School	Farncombe Church of England VC Infant School	Inspection date	14 July 2023
URN	125145	VC/VA/ Academy	Voluntary controlled
Diocese/District	Guildford	Pupils on roll	118
Headteacher	Andrea Simonsson		
Chair of Governors	Helen Gregory		
Inspector	Angela Smith	No.	925