

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Pewley Down, Church of England (VA), Infant School**

Semaphore Road  
Guildford  
Surrey GU1 3PT

#### **Diocese of Guildford**

Local authority: Surrey  
Date of inspection: 11/09/2012  
Date of last inspection: Not previously inspected  
School's unique reference number: 136755  
Headteacher: Mr Richard Rowe  
Inspector's name and number: Mr Andrew Rickett (NSI 201)

#### **School context**

Pewley Down is a smaller than average infant school with 180 pupils on roll. Following consultation, it federated with Holy Trinity Junior School in April 2010 and legally changed status from foundation to voluntary aided in July 2011. This is the first SIAS inspection of the school. There is one governing body and an executive headteacher. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The number supported at school action is above the national average. The majority are of white British background. There is an above average number of other ethnic heritage groups. The proportion with English as an additional language is also above the national average.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Pewley Down as a Church of England school are outstanding**

Pewley Down Infant School openly celebrates its Christian character and this has created an environment in which children and adults confidently express opinions on matters of faith and belief. The school's Christian values make a significant difference to the quality of relationships and have a positive impact on the learning environment.

#### **Established strengths**

- The quality of relationships throughout the school community based on respect and empathy.
- The extent to which collective worship is explicitly Christian.
- The quality of teaching and learning in religious education.
- The commitment of the school's leaders and managers, including governors, to promoting the Christian ethos.

#### **Focus for development**

- Develop the way opportunities are celebrated to recognise 'heaven in the moment'.
- Evaluate the impact of the new religious education topics.
- Strengthen formal assessment of pupil achievement and progress in religious education.

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

The school community explains that strong values have always been at the heart of the vision for the school, but since federation with the church junior school and changing to voluntary aided status, these values have become rooted in an explicit Christian ethos. This is reflected in the school's five core values which are underpinned by Bible teaching to live life to the full. This is evident through the quality of the curriculum and its delivery through teaching and learning. Pupils have a zest for learning because of an imaginative approach to teaching and this makes a positive impact on their achievement and progress. A recent focus on exploring respect and empathy has heightened awareness among all members of the school community of the need to 'step into the other person's shoes' and try to understand things from their point of view. This was referred to in lessons, in the act of worship and in conversations with governors and parents. It is also clearly understood by pupils who are able to discuss with confidence complex issues such as how it may not always be easy to have empathy for others. Spirituality is encouraged through opportunities to 'see heaven in the moment' and pupils have an excellent appreciation of what these opportunities might be. For example, they recognise that they may not be the same for everyone. Some may 'spot them in something amazing like a rainbow', or in 'trying something for the first time'. Others may experience it through 'success in their learning' or hearing that 'their granny has got better'. Pupils were most excited when they explained that 'heaven in the moment' comes from making the choice to attempt something whether you succeed or not. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards school and their learning. They agree that they make good friends and feel safe and secure, knowing that adults are there to look after them. They have a good understanding of the local community and are aware of the wide diversity of cultures and beliefs throughout the world.

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

Acts of worship are explicitly based on Christian teaching and in developing an understanding of how Christians relate to God. Very thorough planning of collective worship ensures that over a five year cycle all pupils learn from Bible stories and what those messages teach about living. There are clear references to the examples given by Jesus, particularly about loving your neighbour and of being loved by God. For instance, the worship observed focussed on developing an understanding of building a relationship with God. It explored how God is faithful by keeping His promises and that we can learn from His example. Themes are developed throughout the term, allowing them to be explored in depth and therefore pupils gain a very good understanding. The weekly pattern of worship effectively supports the development of their knowledge and understanding. For example, the class-based 'thoughtful time' allows teachers to explore the theme in depth at a more personal level. Pupils say that these times are important to them because they have the opportunity to be still and reflect on what they have heard in the hall. The quality of resources giving guidance to teachers in delivering 'thoughtful time' is excellent. Resources are imaginative and focus on engaging pupils in discussion. The use of a special table with candles and a cross help to make collective worship a distinctive part of the school day. Pupils say that the candles 'make it like a peaceful place'. As one pupil commented 'it's a bit like being in the church'. There are good opportunities for pupils to give their views on collective worship and to explain how worship themes relate to their own lives.

The school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

Pupils make excellent progress in religious education (RE). By the time they leave the school at the end of Key Stage 1 the majority achieve significantly above national expectations for the subject. Sustained progress across the school is the result of a consistently high quality of teaching and learning that adds real depth to the pupils' understanding of what they learn from their study of RE. The quality of the curriculum is a major contributor to the successful attainment of high standards. Each RE topic is underpinned by 'big questions' that reflect the quality of teachers' planning and which provide a good level of challenge. This was evident in all lessons observed and reflects the confidence and skill of teachers who place high expectations on the level at which pupils engage and respond in lessons. For example, in a Year 1 lesson pupils were encouraged to take the message from the story of David and Goliath beyond a trial of strength to explore where David got his strength from and God's place in that story. These very young children made excellent progress in that lesson. By the end they were developing their understanding that real strength comes from being strong in your heart especially if God is there too. An effective Year 2 lesson challenged pupils' understanding of Jesus as the light of the world, and how He can help each of them 'shine' in their own lives. Using the images of candles, lighthouses and fire, pupils were expertly guided to use similes and metaphors to express their opinions. The school is in the process of developing its RE scheme of work. Some units have been successfully introduced and others will be implemented this academic year. The school has identified the need to evaluate the impact of these units. High achievement in RE is strengthened through the imaginative planning and learning activities that focus on taking pupils' understanding forward. Pupils respond with great enthusiasm when challenged in their thinking and are focussed and engaged in their learning. The school is aware that it needs to develop a robust structure for assessing progress which informs current achievement and helps identify future developments in RE.

The school meets the statutory requirements for religious education.

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

The executive headteacher has been very successful in leading the school community in developing a deep understanding of what it means to be a church school and in bringing clarity to the school's Christian vision and values. He is very committed to the promotion of the Christian character and is fully supported in this by senior leaders and governors. For example, the head of school, together with the RE leader, ensure that acts of worship are a key part of the school day. The RE leader is passionate about the subject and contributes significantly to the academic achievement of RE and the vibrancy of its curriculum. She has an excellent grasp of what needs to be done to further develop the subject, including the need to develop assessment. The vicar is chair of governors and, together with foundation and other governors, they share a clear understanding of the purpose and meaning of being a church school. This enables them to monitor and evaluate effectively the impact of the Christian distinctiveness. Through a wide variety of links, the school has excellent relationships with local churches and regularly uses the parish church to celebrate major Christian festivals. The breadth of links with other churches is reflected in the range of foundation governors who come from a variety of churches and denominations. Members of the church community support the school in a number of practical ways. Parents spoken to said that the school has a 'gentle and warm approach' to the way it promotes the Christian ethos. They say the school is sincere in its vision and helps their children to have the knowledge and confidence to begin to make up their own minds about what they believe. They affirmed that the school's vision to consider each child as 'unique in the eyes of God' is reflected in the way that their children are loved and treasured at Pewley Down Infant School.