

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St John's Church of England VC Primary School

Vision

Imagine a world where all are equal and all are different, living compassionately, learning together, embracing challenges, building tolerance and resilience, standing strong and making a positive difference in God's amazing world.

All different, all equal, all learning together in God's world

The Parable of the Good Samaritan – Luke 10:25-37

Strengths

- School leaders are guided by the school's Christian vision to make decisions and actions that have a demonstrable impact on pupils' learning and flourishing.
- A strong feeling of belonging and inclusion shapes the inward culture of the school community. The caring environment means that people are treated well and enables staff, pupils and adults to flourish.
- Pastoral care and a focus on wellbeing are tangible. They are an effective outworking of the school's vision to live compassionately. This is particularly the case when pupils and adults experience difficult times.
- Shaped by the school vision, the curriculum (including the extracurricular offer) has been designed to respond to and meet the needs of the school community. Pupils who require additional support are well served.
- Collective worship is highly valued, inclusive and life-giving. These times offer the school community the opportunity to flourish spiritually, particularly through being together and the time to reflect. This reflection continues into the school day.

Development Points

- Deepen the understanding of spirituality for staff, pupils and governors, developing a shared language and enriching planned opportunities within the curriculum. This will enable a consistent and cohesive approach to spiritual development.
- Expand opportunities for the school community to engage in social action and for pupils to make a difference in the world. This will enable pupils to take responsibility and stand up against situations of injustice.
- Embed a systematic and rigorous process of monitoring and evaluation by governors in religious education (RE). In this way, they will support the growth and development of the subject across the school.



Inspection Findings

The Christian vision creates a powerful sense of belonging and togetherness. 'All different, all equal, all learning together in God's world' is a shared pursuit and a living reality in school. One pupil stated, 'we all need different things to be successful'. Pupils, staff and governors are inspired by the story of the good Samaritan. This enables the community to feel cared for and supported and then inspired to behave towards others in the same way. Pupils feel pride in being awarded a good Samaritan badge. Some conveyed that their actions motivate them more than gaining recognition. Pupils and adults express ownership of and commitment to the values of compassion, forgiveness, tolerance and trust. These values are seen in action across the school. Inclusion is at the heart of the school's vision. This means that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and their families flourish. Parents feel listened to and the vision impacts their children, helping them on their unique learning journeys. Governors have a secure understanding of the school and use the Christian vision as the basis for decision-making.

Celebrating the unique talents and gifts of pupils, the curriculum design provides rich learning opportunities. Pupils and staff speak passionately about everyone being gifted in different ways and how this enables each person to achieve. The school demonstrates its value for everyone through its provision for those with SEND. This is reflected in the wide range of extracurricular activities offered. All pupils are encouraged to take part in a club and, in turn, grow in confidence and self-esteem. Arranging visitors, trips and special learning days helps to foster an abundant learning environment. The forest school provides opportunities for staff and pupils to experience awe and wonder. Pupils love being outside in nature, which helps them to feel calm and peaceful. Opportunities for reflection across the curriculum are being explored. Leaders and staff have not developed a shared understanding of spiritual development which explicitly informs curriculum planning.

Collective worship is highly valued and inspires the school community into action. It builds a strong sense of community, with pupils and staff appreciating the time to be together as a school family. Worship is inclusive, and support is given so that all pupils can experience daily worship. Staff reflect that it would be like missing a family member if everyone was not present. Invitational language enables all to participate with integrity. Pupils share how they are encouraged to reflect and show respect, even at times when they do not want to join in. Bible stories, presented engagingly, inspire pupils to follow the teachings of the Bible. One child was inspired by a recent message of 'nothing is impossible.' For them, it means that even if something is hard and takes a long time, you can keep going. Times of stillness, personal reflection and big questions foster spiritual growth. Activities beyond worship allow pupils to reflect further on themes. Pupils are supported in their spiritual development through classroom prayer stations. They appreciate these areas as places to hand over worries and find peace. A close relationship with the local church and clergy enhances the worship experience.

Inspired by the Christian vision, leaders have created an effective ethos centered around nurture and inclusion. All feel known and cared for in this welcoming community. This ethos is built through respecting and living the school's vision and values. Difference is embraced and celebrated. Adults in the school are approachable and trustworthy. Pupils talk about the care shown to them by adults who listen and help them. They feel that there is always someone to talk to about their feelings and worries, especially during difficult times. This culture ensures that pupils interact well together in class and on the playground. New systems at playtimes help to resolve conflicts, with restorative conversations allowing pupils to move forward in forgiveness and renewal. Staff feel part of a close-knit team that fosters their emotional wellbeing as much as their professional development.

Pupils explain that they are inspired to stand up for others through the story of the good Samaritan. As a result, they believe that they can help make the community and world better through individual and collective effort. The school council enables ideas to be shared, leading to positive changes, such as developing a sensory garden.



The eco-committee allows pupils to care for their school and community. Recently, pupils raised money to help rebuild part of a local wildlife reserve following a fire. Pupils were spurred on by a sense of injustice about what had happened. Reflecting on this, pupils shared that it felt good to know that they had made a difference. Pupils raise money for charities throughout the year, learning about the work of these organisations. The introduction of the 'picture news' resource has exposed children to issues of injustice in an age-appropriate way. However, pupils' understanding of wider injustice and their role as advocates for change is not fully developed. Most initiatives have a local focus and are initiated by adults.

RE is led effectively and given high priority. The subject is taught through a sequential scheme designed to build on prior learning and deepen understanding. Big questions encourage reflection and the development of personal responses. RE provides a safe space for pupils to share their thoughts and ideas and disagree respectfully. Difference is celebrated and listening to each other is central to the approach to RE. Pupils explain that they are taught to respect and understand religions and worldviews. They particularly enjoy creative learning opportunities within RE. Pupils find the subject interesting and challenging, eager to learn about different faiths. One pupil said, 'You listen to an idea and if you agree, you add it to your own and make your idea bigger.' Pupils take pride in their books and enjoy sharing their work. Strong partnerships between the school and clergy enhance teaching and learning. Senior leaders review the subject through pupil voice activities, learning walks, and observations. Governors have some information about RE but monitoring is not sufficiently robust to fully support its ongoing development.

Information

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| Address | Bayham Road, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 3XD | | |
| Date | 22 October 2024 | URN | 118606 |
| Type of school | Maintained Voluntary Controlled | No. of pupils | 197 |
| Diocese | Rochester | | |
| Headteacher | Therese Pullan | | |
| Chair of Governors | Robin Jones | | |
| Inspector | Natalie Ralph | | |