

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St. George's Church of England Primary School

Address Chequers Road, Minster on Sea, Sheerness, ME12 3QU.

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 **Good**

The impact of collective worship **Good**

The effectiveness of religious education (RE) **Good**

School's vision

Aspirational opportunities for all through the breath of God.

St George's leads the community by following the teachings of Christ through holistically ensuring excellence for all. Through our happy, secure and stimulating environment, all members of the school community grow in self-esteem and potential. Their spiritual, academic and social needs are celebrated as part of daily life.

Key findings

- Strong leadership provided by the senior team ensures that the Christian vision drives the education of the whole child. The broad range of learning opportunities inspires and promotes aspiration for pupils.
- Driven by the Christian vision, relationships across the school community are very positive, supporting children and adults to flourish. Pupil behaviour is very good.
- The school prioritises and is highly effective at meeting the needs of vulnerable pupils and those with additional learning and personal needs so that they thrive.
- Collective worship helps pupils and adults to grow spiritually, and positively influences pupils' behaviour and relationships. Opportunities for pupils to lead collective worship, however, are under-developed.
- Teaching and learning in religious education (RE) is effective overall. However, pupils' lack depth of understanding of a range of faiths and beliefs.

Areas for development

- Enable pupils to develop a deep understanding of a range of faiths and beliefs through planning and provision in RE.
- Extend pupils' leadership of collective worship so they gain a deeper understanding of the nature of Christian worship.
- Improve the detail and precision of monitoring the vision of the school as a church school in the drive for excellence.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

The strong sense of Christian community shines out at St George's School. Parents value the Christian vision that nurtures pupils to be the best they can be. They praise the welcome they receive and the supportive relationships between staff, pupils and parents. They appreciate the efforts made by the school to maintain the focus on the vision during the pandemic. These views are supported by the findings of the inspection.

The senior leadership team ensures that the Christian vision drives decisions and policies to ensure that pupils have rich opportunities to widen their horizons. The staff speak highly of the professional and personal support provided by school leadership through recent challenging times. They recognise this as an illustration of the school's vision. There is a strong commitment to RE and collective worship, and the subject leader ensures that teachers are well supported to deliver these with confidence. Governors articulate the school vision with passion. They know the school well and are ambitious. Leaders, including governors, carry out monitoring of RE and collective worship but their view of the impact of the Christian vision lacks precision. This means that areas for improvement as a church school are not identified clearly enough.

The school has a strong partnership with the trust, and senior leaders provide support to other schools within it. The deputy headteacher has been promoted recently to lead another school. Clear succession planning enables continuity of Christian distinctiveness in the key areas of RE and collective worship. There are effective links with the diocese, and staff value the professional development they receive. This has led to improvements in the quality of RE and the effective promotion of spirituality. Staff receive clear induction and on-going training in understanding their role in Church school education.

Inspired by the vision, there is a focus on highly effective pastoral care and wellbeing. Every child is welcomed and nurtured as an individual. During the pandemic, the school supported families by providing food parcels and social care. A pastoral manager and play therapist directly support pupils and families. They are skilled at identifying and supporting vulnerable pupils, and those with additional learning needs, to overcome barriers to learning so that they flourish in a friendly and safe environment. This has led to improved attendance and behaviour for some pupils. This investment contributes significantly to the life of the school and is an expression of the Christian vision. The focus on wellbeing recently led to the achievement of a mental health award which involved all staff being trained in the principles of *Valuing all God's Children*.

Pupils are very well behaved and show great respect for each other. They thrive on responsibilities given to them and take pride in providing care to younger pupils. In response to the Christian vision, behavioural difficulties are reflected upon with pupils so that they develop an understanding of the importance of forgiveness. The school provides an age-appropriate programme for relationships education that reflects the school's Christian vision. Pupils say that this supports them in exploring ideas about different ways that people live.

In line with the Christian vision, the school provides a wide breadth of curriculum opportunities and a rich range of learning resources. Leaders understand the challenges of disruption to learning caused by the pandemic and are focused on promoting aspiration for all. A recent decision to enhance the curriculum to enrich opportunities and inspire learners is enabling children to flourish. Pupils are engaged in enquiry-led learning and talk about how it is preparing them for their future. They have positive aspirations and speak with confidence about which areas of learning have had an impact. Several are passionate about the environment and reflect on the importance of actions such as beach cleaning and trash art projects. They link these to respect for the planet, care for the environment and love of God's world. Opportunities such as Forest Schools and engagement in the arts provide rich spiritual opportunities. A focus on thinking skills enables pupils to develop confidence, self-esteem and resilience.

Pupils show care for the wider world by initiating fund raising projects for charities selected by themselves. Recently, this included a pupil-led project for 'Children in Need'. At harvest, pupils donated food to the foodbank run by Holy Trinity Sheerness. Involvement in these activities means that pupils are beginning to understand that they can be advocates for change within their community and beyond.

Teaching and learning in RE is given high priority and this makes a positive contribution to the school's Christian vision and values. Pupils understand how RE benefits them in developing respect for others. The subject leader has taken steps to improve curriculum planning to ensure deeper understanding of Christianity. RE learning was provided during the pandemic, but engagement was inconsistent. As a response, plans have been adjusted to enable teachers to address gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. There is a clear sequence of

progression for developing understanding of Christianity, but the provision for learning about a range of world faiths and beliefs is limited.

Collective worship is an expression of the school's Christian vision. Pupils and staff talk about its value in providing a space for quiet reflection to think about themselves and respond to the needs of others. It is here that the 'breath of God' is apparent. Pupils comment that the exploration of the vision and values in collective worship positively influences how they treat others with dignity and respect. They relate their understanding of the importance of loving others to Bible stories they have heard. A range of staff, as well as the vicar from Minster Abbey, lead acts of worship. Relationships between the church and school have improved since he moved into this role during the pandemic. Parents, pupils and staff value the connection with Minster Abbey and speak of the sense of community gained from school services held there such as Harvest. Staff feel confident to lead acts of collective worship because of the detailed planning, training and support they receive. Pupils are proud of their role as "worship warriors", helping and supporting whole school and class worship. However, their role is not developed in enabling them to actively lead and influence collective worship.

The school has a clear understanding of spiritual development. Prayer spaces in classrooms are valued by pupils and reflect their thoughts and questions. Pupils across the school articulate the importance of prayer, and the range of opportunities provided helps pupils and adults to flourish and grow spiritually.



The effectiveness of RE is

Good

Teaching is good overall. Pupils enjoy RE, responding creatively, as well as through discussion and writing. Teachers use the approach of enquiry-based learning, which stimulates discussion and reasoning. Evidence in books, and talking with pupils, shows that most make good progress, including the disadvantaged. Pupils demonstrate critical thinking within Christianity, but are unable to talk in depth about a range of faiths and beliefs.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	30 November 2021	URN	142372
Date of previous inspection	04 March 2015		
School status	Voluntary Aided Primary	NOR	386
Name of MAT	Aquila Diocese of Canterbury Academies Trust		
Diocese	Canterbury		
Headteacher	Howard Fisher		
Pupil profile	The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is in line with national averages.		
	The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages.		
Additional significant information (if needed)	St George's joined Aquila, The Diocese of Canterbury Academies Trust, in 2015.		
Inspector's name	Susan Costa	No.	902