

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Old Bexley Church of England Primary School	
Address	Hurst Road, Bexley, DA5 3JR
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>We Love God, Love Each Other and Love Learning</p> <p>Celebrating all our children as unique and made in the image of God. We strive for the mountain top, ensuring everyone can flourish in their learning and live life in all its fullness.</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is rooted in genuine kindness and an all-encompassing acceptance of all. Lives of those it serves are unequivocally transformed. Each member of the school community is lovingly celebrated as a unique child of God. • Pupils and adults embody the school's Christian values, the Fruit of the Spirit. These inspire respectful and compassionate behaviour towards one another and aspirational attitudes to learning. • Innovative curriculum design provides a wealth of enriching and diverse experiences. This nurtures a life-long love of learning. Pupils are inspired to be agents of change. For some pupils, however, their confidence in responding to situations of injustice is still developing. • Collective worship has a profound impact on the personal and spiritual life of the school community. Inspiring biblical teaching impacts tangibly on the way pupils think and behave. Regular moments of prayer and meditation create a sense of peace, bringing wholeness and hope to all. • Religious education (RE) is led and taught effectively. This has enabled most pupils to have a good understanding of people, their lives, and beliefs. However, the sequencing of world religions within the RE curriculum limits some pupils in connecting and building on prior knowledge.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deepen opportunities to discuss situations of injustice and disadvantage. This will further empower pupils to be active agents of change, both in and out of school. • Review and develop the sequence of units in the RE curriculum so that pupils revisit topics more regularly. This will ensure that learning is progressive and pupils can confidently build connections between religions and worldviews.



Inspection findings

At the heart of Old Bexley School is a profound culture of loving kindness and all-encompassing acceptance. The firmly established Christian vision and values intertwine into every layer of school life and are embodied by all. School staff ensure every pupil and family feels connected, known and loved, despite the large size of the school. The shared understanding that all are made in the image of God ensures the uniqueness of every pupil is actively celebrated. As a result, all thrive through a journey of aspirational and sustained transformation. The Christian vision was inspired by biblical narratives of mountain-top experiences and the life-changing spiritual moments that took place there. Flowing from this, school leaders create an enriching learning environment that enables all to reach the top of their mountain. The journey to the top is celebrated as much as the destination. Through invitational worship and practical actions, 'Love God' is expressed and understood by all. Pupils know they do not have to follow God but can still show God love and respect.

Dynamic school leaders, supported by the Amadeus Primary Academies Trust, have put in place systems and processes that are robust and purposeful. There is a culture of rigorous discussion and questioning, which guarantees pertinent support is put in place for all who need it. As a result, the school is regularly requested to support other schools. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school. The school's vision is an anchor point for all decisions and monitoring. When challenging progress data, for example, questions are framed around the vision to ensure every pupil makes progress in reaching their mountain top.

Leaders place the wellbeing and good mental health of everyone as a high priority. Consequently, staff flourish, knowing that their professional development and wellbeing are considered equally. Bold budgetary decisions ensure that staff are released to walk alongside those needing additional nurture and therapy. Rooted in love, the school's exemplary pastoral care makes a difference. Pupils who were reluctant attenders now come into school with a smile. Pupils are trained to be 'Wizards of Wellbeing' and staff to be mental health first aiders. All are encouraged to articulate their emotions and understand it is 'ok to not be ok'. As a result, pupils feel free to be themselves to live an abundant life. Pupils behave well across the school and genuinely watch over one another with unrelenting kindness.

The school's Christian values, the Fruit of the Spirit, have formed a common language. All find opportunities to celebrate progress, behaviour and attitudes linked to the 'fruit'. Parents praise the positive influence the school's vision and values have on their family life. One described how their child inspired her to be more peaceful. Another parent said, 'I regularly see the vision and Fruit of the Spirit in action in the incredibly kind and respectful way the children respond and play together.'

School leaders are relentless and passionate in ensuring that every pupil is equipped with the skills they need to grow and make progress. As a reflection of this, school staff provide highly individualised provision and teaching. Consequently, pupils learn well and make good or better progress.

Sparked by the school's vision and values, school leaders have implemented an innovative and cohesive curriculum. Opportunities to grow spiritually and explore situations of injustice are woven intentionally throughout. Through books and topic work, pupils regularly meet influential people who are courageous advocates. As a result, most pupils recognise what it takes to be an agent of change and have been inspired to stand up for situations of injustice in and out of school. This was evident in the way pupils responded with compassion and

generosity to recent global tragedies and local charities. Pupils explained their motivation, saying 'The Fruit of the Spirit encourage us to be generous and kind, so we are. It is the right thing to do.' Leaders' recent introduction of Pupil Passports is helping to further develop spirituality and a deeper love of learning.

Pupil leaders are inspirational role models. Through their challenging questions and discussions, they speak into all areas of school life, advocating for all. Together, the pupils brought change to the format of collective worship and activities at playtime.

Collective worship is joyful and an integral part of the school day. It is highly valued by all. A pupil explained that 'without daily worship we wouldn't know how to behave or remain connected to one another.' The inclusive and respectful culture of worship ensures all members of the school community know that worship is for everyone. Those of all faiths and none take up the invitation to participate in their own way, reflecting on the relevance of biblical passages to their lives. A pupil expressed that she was inspired by Jesus' Sermon on the Mount to live a more compassionate life. Another reflected on the importance of making a situation right by saying sorry and acting differently through the story of Zacchaeus. Pupils spoke about the power of prayer and the impact which being still and quiet has on their wellbeing and happiness. There is a strong relationship with a number of local churches who proactively support the worshipping life of the school. The pupil leadership team, Mountain Climbers, is passionate about their role. They shared how it is a privilege to serve and lead their peers in worship. The enthusiastic team regularly leads acts of worship across the school. Supported by the clergy team and school leaders, their confidence and understanding in planning and leading inspirational acts of worship is blossoming.

The RE leader monitors the subject efficiently and has put in place a robust system of assessment which informs planning. As a result, most pupils are flourishing in RE. Pupils are proud of the work they produce and recognise the importance of learning about people of all faiths and beliefs. RE lessons provide a safe space for rich dialogue, opportunities to ask big questions and explore theological concepts. However, not all pupils are able to confidently recall knowledge and understanding of world faiths which they have previously studied.

Old Bexley Church of England Primary School is a place of peace, enduring kindness and instinctive acceptance of all. The lives of those who attend and are connected to the school are richer and transformed because of the time spent learning and living together.

Information			
School	Old Bexley Church of England Primary School	Inspection date	8 February 2023
URN	142228	VC/VA/Academy	Academy
Diocese/District	Rochester	Pupils on roll	780
MAT/Federation	Amadeus Primary Academies Trust		
Principal	Jill Ivil		
Chair of Governors	Julie Bowen		
Inspector	Rebecca Swansbury	No.	970