

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Peter's Church of England Primary School			
Address	Mount Pleasant, Aylesford, Kent ME20 7BE		
Date of inspection	10 October 2019	Status of school	VC Primary
Diocese	Rochester	URN	118617

Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	Grade	Good
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good

School context

St Peter's primary school with 173 pupils on roll. The school has a low level of religious and cultural diversity and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is below national averages. The school was graded good by Ofsted in March 2019.

The school's Christian vision

Jesus said; 'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full' John 10:10

Key findings

- The school has been through a period of change in staffing and leadership. A newly formed Christian vision, underpinning the curriculum, has enabled the school to progress and to broaden opportunities, so that pupils are on a journey to live life in all its fullness. The vision is not fully reflected in policies or in the school plan.
- The UNICEF rights respecting school award has provided a foundation and framework for relationships that are mutually respectful, and cherish and nurture the wellbeing of all. This mirrors the school's values of hope, respect, faith, love, forgiveness and perseverance which are enabling individual pupils to experience a growing maturity mentally, physically, spiritually, morally and academically. Opportunities for pupils to embrace courageous advocacy are more limited.
- Pupils enjoy collective worship which enables them to reflect on the school values and Bible stories. Limited monitoring by adults and pupils means that future development opportunities in worship are not identified.
- Religious education (RE) is led effectively and offers a safe place for thinking and reflecting on the big questions in life. Although pupils enjoy discussion on a range of topics, the absence of more creative activities limits their opportunities to deepen their learning further.

Areas for development

- Make reference to the Christian vision and values more explicit in all relevant policies and in the school development plan to demonstrate how the vision is clearly driving all aspects of school improvement.
- Encourage more child led and independent opportunities to explore issues of fairness, which will deepen pupils' understanding of injustice and encourage them to become courageous advocates for change.
- Build on the current monitoring for collective worship so that the views of adult and pupils can support a more creative approach to planning and to the development of worship.
- Embed creative learning opportunities within RE to enable pupils to deepen their understanding of Christianity and world faiths.

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 school has experienced a period of instability and change in recent years. Under new leadership, the school has created a vision with a linked Bible story and associated Christian values of hope, respect, faith, love, forgiveness and perseverance. This has underpinned recent school planning and unified the community around growth and development. Policies have been rewritten and a new school plan put in place. Although reflecting the vision, they do not, as yet, refer to it explicitly. To nurture the school's journey, school leaders have sought effective partnerships with the diocese, the local church and other local schools. This has supported the professional development of staff and secured monitoring of pupils' work. In turn, this has secured improving progress and attainment for the majority of groups of pupils. Governors are fully engaged with school improvement. They support the school effectively with regular and rigorous monitoring of the school as a church school. This holds the school to account, as well as offering constructive challenge. The key development areas from the previous denominational inspection have been addressed.

In recent times, St Peter's has developed the teaching of literacy and maths in order to ensure high aspirations for pupils. A literacy scheme, with a focus on a range of literature, has supported pupils in understanding and respecting difference and diversity. From this secure base, the school has established a broader curriculum. This is through a day of creative learning of sport, music and art. In turn, this has enabled all groups of pupils to thrive and recognise their unique talents and abilities. Pupils are eager to learn. They respond positively to the classroom discussions where they are challenged by big questions. Pupils listen to each other with sensitivity and respond thoughtfully. Considerable care is taken to support those with SEND. They are fully included within all activities and flourish within specific interventions. In keeping with the school's vision and in response to the needs of the community, a wide range of sporting activities and after school clubs have been introduced.

The UNICEF rights respecting school award, working alongside the Christian vision, has helped to establish excellent relationships amongst and between pupils, staff and parents. This has enabled all to flourish socially. Everyone is treated with dignity and respect. This results in calm interactions, where forgiveness and tolerance are paramount. Pupils have a mature spirituality reflected in their friendships and responses to learning across the curriculum. Pupils are secure in their place within the school community, recognising that to flourish they must look to the wellbeing of each other. This has created a community, described as an 'oasis' by one staff member, where each individual is valued within the school family. It has also impacted on improving attendance for all pupils. Pupils know how to manage their own feelings and emotions and can talk with confidence about how to do this. Opportunities to take part in European travel have strengthened pupils' perseverance and ability to manage change. There are clear systems in place for them to seek help if they have any worries. As a result, they have positive mental health and behaviour is very good. Staff also speak with passion about the value of the staff team. They say that friendship and mutual support enable them to protect their wellbeing and flourish within the workplace. The UNICEF project has stimulated a care for those in other parts of the world and subsequent fundraising to this end. Pupils are also involved in fundraising for various local, national and international charities. However, pupils' understanding and applying of social injustice is at an early stage of development and opportunities for courageous advocacy are limited.

Pupils enjoy collective worship, responding positively to the themes linked to Bible stories and the school's values. Pupils have a thorough understanding of the story of the mustard seed and link it readily to their own growth, not only academically, but also as an individual. The Anglican tradition is apparent in the use of candles, Bible stories, liturgy and some hymn singing. Pupils support the adults within worship by lighting the candle and reading a prayer selected from the prayer tree. A group has begun to plan and lead worship on a regular basis. Some monitoring of worship has been established by pupils and governors. The impact of this is not embedded so it does not support the improvement of worship effectively. Pupils have a limited understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils and staff share an enthusiasm for worship and understand the messages that are being presented and how they impact on their daily lives. However, the presentation of themes is strongly focused on the spoken word with questioning. An absence of a creative interpretation and presentation of stories is limiting engagement for all. The daily programme of worship is enhanced by visits to the parish church for key church festivals.

RE is led effectively by an enthusiastic leader. She has attended diocesan training which she has shared with staff. Collaborative working with other local schools is also enabling the school to share best practice and develop the quality of teaching. The RE leader supports staff effectively in the introduction of the Understanding Christianity programme. In line with the school's vision, she has listened to staff concerns and supported them in improving their subject knowledge as well as modelling creative ways of learning. Pupils are able to discuss big questions with confidence, demonstrating reflective thinking. Opportunities to deepen their understanding of Christianity and other faiths is missed through an absence of creative activities. Marking and assessment are supporting pupil progress in RE well.

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