

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St George's, Bickley, Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Address Tylney Road, Bromley, Kent BR1 2RL

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

School's vision

A flourishing fellowship: learning together with God by our side

At St George's we are proud to be one family of lifelong learners who know that they are special to God. Our family is built upon a strong sense of belonging and mutual respect. Our community gives our children the freedom to flourish and succeed.

Key findings

- Partnerships beyond the school, in particular with the Aquinas Trust, of which the academy is a member, and parents support the development of a vibrant learning community and a rich and varied curriculum. This enables all pupils to flourish academically. However, opportunities for spiritual development within the curriculum are less well planned at present.
- In line with its vision, the school has established a family ethos that supports and nurtures pupils, staff and parents. This creates a strong sense of belonging and mutual respect, impacting positively on learning and pupil behaviour. This was evident during the recent pandemic and on the subsequent return to school.
- Collective worship offers a safe place for thinking and reflecting, playing a key part in pupil's understanding of the school's Christian virtues and their relevance to pupils' lives. Formal monitoring of worship is currently less well developed, as is pupil's use of prayer within their spiritual development.
- Religious Education (RE) is taught well. As a result, pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of Christian belief and practice, as well as an understanding of a range of world religions. Marking for improvement and opportunities to extend learning need to be developed further.

Areas for development

- Develop a shared vision of spiritual development and plan explicit opportunities for developing it across the curriculum.
- Create a more robust structure for monitoring collective worship, so that it continues to offer inspirational opportunities for all. This will also include an exploration of the use of prayer throughout the school, so that it supports pupils' spiritual development.
- Ensure that monitoring by the Aquinas Trust reflects on the wording of the school's vision. This is so that the school will continue to be challenged about the impact of the vision in enabling all to flourish. This will also ensure that the vision continues to underpin future school development within the curriculum and worship.
- Improve planning and assessment in RE so that the curriculum provides greater challenge for those pupils excelling in RE.

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's vision and linked Christian virtues of fellowship, love, thankfulness, forgiveness, trust and hope lie at the centre of St George's strategic development. Very effective partnerships with the Aquinas Trust, as well as the Diocese of Rochester, local church and parents provide a supportive and strengthening network for the school. Unrelenting efforts by school leaders to continue improving teaching and learning and offer a wider range of opportunities for pupils to flourish is supported by collaborative work with other Aquinas schools. These close bonds provide opportunities for teaching staff and subject leaders to share best practice and to monitor teaching and learning. This secures strong staff development and enables them to flourish within their classroom pedagogy. Although the trust monitors the work of the school, it does not include clear references to the vision within their monitoring reports. In this way, opportunities to support and challenge improvements within the school's Christian distinctiveness and vision are missed.

The curriculum has been devised with the vision at its heart. Opportunities for enquiry based learning, as well as the school's enrichment days, wide range of extracurricular activities and the Forest School, inspire enthusiasm and engagement from all. Those with additional needs are treated with love and respect, whether working in the classroom or when provided with specific support in the nurture room. As a result, there is positive progress and overall attainment for all. Opportunities for spiritual development within the curriculum are at an early stage of development. At present, this is not consistently included within curriculum plans.

St George's has a strong family ethos, demonstrating care and nurture of all within the school community. Every pupil and adult, in line with the vision, knows that they are special to God. Each one feels a strong sense of belonging. Positive relationships are modelled by staff who demonstrate constant enthusiasm and passion for the school community. They live out the vision in their actions and words. Staff care for each other as much as for pupils and their families. They support each other effectively on their own learning journey as they develop their teaching expertise. Pupils feel involved in the daily organization of their school, embracing a range of roles of responsibility whether within the classroom, on the playground or as members of the school council. The celebration of individuality and difference within the school inspires respect and care for each one. This extends to the choice of resources, for example, the library books reflect individuals from a variety of backgrounds and from a range of lifestyles and choices. This helps pupils recognise their intrinsic value within the community and in turn treat others within the school with kindness and respect. The impact of this is evident through excellent behaviour and school attendance.

The involvement of parents within the school family adds a special dimension. They are warmly welcomed and have a genuine partnership in the school's development. Their fundraising enables a range of items that enhance learning to be purchased. Parents also offer their expertise to support school enrichment days. This includes participating in the careers day, reading to pupils in their first language or sharing information about their history, such as about the Windrush generation. During the recent pandemic the school's flourishing fellowship was demonstrated. Online learning was enhanced by the active participation of parents. Staff checked in with pupils each day and provided extra nurture online as required, thus fostering positive pupil wellbeing. This ensured that the return to school after the lockdown was seamless for the vast majority and also helped sustain ongoing academic achievement.

The vision shines through conversations between staff and pupils, which are consistently affirmative and positive. This generates pupils' self-confidence. Pupils are undeterred by difficulties in learning, showing strong resilience. They are calm when facing challenges and are secure in how to seek help or in how to resolve an issue for themselves. The school's restorative justice programme, to manage behaviour issues, has given pupils the skills to resolve problems in a mature and calm manner.

Collective worship celebrates and strengthens the Christian vision. The school has a strong relationship with the local church. The parish priest, prior to his recent departure, provided caring and nurturing support to the school through worship, whether in person or online during the pandemic. They held Eucharist services regularly for all pupils and prayer meetings for staff and parents. This drew the community together. Pupils are involved in leading worship, lighting candles, reading prayers and Bible verses. Pupil involvement in planning worship is at an early stage of development. Staff regularly review school worship informally. No formal monitoring of worship by staff or pupils is currently in place, to monitor the delivery and subsequent impact of worship on the school community. Since the departure of the priest,

teaching staff have taken ownership of class worship. They have been fully supported and nurtured in this role by the worship leader. This has ensured consistency of practice and a growth in staff confidence in leading worship.

Within the school's safe environment, pupils are given opportunities to reflect on the school virtues. This has inspired deep and thoughtful reflections by many. Each class has a dedicated prayer space. Pupils know that they can thank God through prayer, but opportunities to explore other areas of their lives through reflection, meditation or prayer are more limited. The focus on the school's virtues within PSHE and worship ensures that pupils care for their family at St Georges and also seek ways to support the wider community. This is seen through a range of charitable fund raising inspired by pupils, parents and staff.

The diocese provides effective support to develop the RE curriculum within the school. In particular, participating in meetings with other RE leaders ensures that the school regularly reviews and develops its RE provision. Inspired by a desire for all to be lifelong learners, information is readily shared with all staff by the subject leader. This in turn impacts on the quality of teaching and strong provision of RE. Pupils' work includes a range of activities reflecting Christianity and world religions. At present opportunities to explore themes at greater depth, particularly for those who are exceeding in RE, is missed in some lessons. Some of the marking does not enable pupils to extend and deepen their learning. Pupils are enthused by their work and speak with pride of their achievements. They apply learning very effectively to their own lives. For example, a study on the story of the prodigal son has enabled pupils to reflect on the impact of saying sorry and forgiveness. This demonstrates how the school community has given pupils freedom to flourish and succeed.

Contextual information about the school

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| Date of inspection | 2 March 2022 | URN | 143097 |
| Date of previous inspection | 6 May 2015 | | |
| School status | Voluntary controlled primary school | NOR | 393 |
| Name of MAT/Federation | Aquinas Church of England Education Trust Limited | | |
| Diocese / Methodist District | Rochester | | |
| Headteacher | Ellen Peyton | | |
| Pupil profile | 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 is below national averages. | | |
| Additional significant information (if needed) | The school joined the Aquinas Trust in 2016. The school works closely with representatives of the Aquinas Trust and the Aquinas Advisory Council. | | |
| Inspector's name | Elizabeth Pettersen | No. | 557 |