

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Yalding St Peter and St Paul Church of England Primary School			
Address	Vicarage Road, Yalding, Maidstone, Kent ME18 6DP		
Date of inspection	14 March 2019	Status of school	Voluntary Controlled
Diocese	Rochester	URN	118638

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

Yalding St Peter and St Paul is primary school with 169 pupils on roll. The school has a very 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. Since the last inspection, there have been substantial changes in the leadership and teaching staff. A recent Ofsted inspection judged the school to be good.

The school's Christian vision

Our Christian vision is to provide a caring and engaging learning environment which nurtures the wellbeing and aspirations of all members of the school community. Through our Christian values of love, respect and responsibility, we enable everyone to flourish personally, morally, spiritually and academically – embracing “Life in all its fullness”.

Key findings

- The school has recently crafted an inclusive and aspirational vision statement which is rooted in biblical narrative. It is highlighting existing good practice and has begun to influence ongoing development plans. However, not all documentation reflects the new vision.
- A broad, balanced curriculum is tailored to meet the needs of all pupils and provides many opportunities for pupils' spiritual development but is not sufficiently outward looking.
- Positive behaviour strategies, a focus on forgiveness and reconciliation and the use of peer mediators increasingly help pupils learn to live well together.
- Worship is well planned and led with an engaging and varied approach. Pupil leaders have begun to take more responsibility for planning and monitoring worship making reflective observations and suggestions for improvement.
- Religious education (RE) challenges pupils' thinking, providing a safe arena in which pupils reflect on theological concepts, exploring and discussing a range of beliefs and convictions. Currently, only a small proportion of pupils are able to work above age related expectations in this subject.

Areas for development

- Develop and share the school's understanding of 'Life in all its fullness' to enrich the curriculum and meet the interests and aptitudes of all learners, helping them develop their full potential.
- Establish a shared, school understanding of what is meant by spirituality, so that opportunities for spiritual development in the curriculum are fully recognised and taken.
- Develop the curriculum to include further opportunities for pupils to ask big questions and consider ways to challenge injustice and make a difference in the world.
- Enhance pupils' experiences of difference and diversity to prepare them for life in the global community.

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

Following consultation with stakeholders and in line with current Church school initiatives, the school has developed an inclusive, aspirational vision statement rooted in Christian narrative. The theology behind the vision has been considered by leaders but not shared widely with the community. The school is at an early stage in working the vision through its policies and practices, although many aspects of existing practice already align with it. Theology, supporting the values of love, respect and responsibility, is more established and helps pupils to understand them in different contexts. Great importance is placed on collective worship in supporting pupils' spiritual development. It provides a setting in which pupils can reflect on the school's vision, values and significant issues. There is a close relationship with the adjacent parish church. Local clergy are active in the school, providing practical support as well as guidance and training for staff. The school has made good use of its partnership with Rochester Diocese, attending all relevant training, in order to establish good practice in Church school education, worship and RE. The governing body has established a focus group to oversee Church school development. It carries out regular monitoring visits to ensure that agreed policies and practices are carried out. Previous inspection recommendations have meant that all stakeholders have been involved in forming the vision and that areas for spiritual reflection have been created around the site.

The school offers a broad, balanced curriculum that enables pupils to make good academic progress. Strategies are in place to identify and support more vulnerable pupils, including those with mental health concerns. The school has recently re-structured the role of teaching assistants to target resources as effectively as possible. A good range of extra-curricular clubs provide interesting experiences for those who attend. There are many sporting and musical opportunities. The school provides occasions for pupils' spiritual development, but there is no clear, shared understanding of what spirituality might encompass. Consequently, opportunities within the existing curriculum are not always recognised and taken up. RE provides an approach in which 'big questions' develop curiosity by encouraging pupils to explore and discuss ideas in a creative way. However, this has not been developed as well in other subjects. As a result, opportunities to consider matters such as deprivation, disadvantage and exploitation of natural resources, are not always integral to the curriculum. Some older pupils, however, have been motivated to make a difference by raising money for good causes. There is a long-standing link with a school in the Gambia, however, this is not currently being used to its full potential. Overall, opportunities for pupils to explore difference and diversity are not sufficiently identified and developed within the curriculum.

After a period of considerable change, leaders have developed a spirit of mutual support and an open, coaching culture to improve practice. Relationships are good and parents report that staff are approachable and quick to respond to their concerns. Pupil attendance is taken seriously. Established procedures explore and challenge absences promptly so that pupils do not fall behind in their learning. Pupils have a good grasp of the school's associated Christian values. A new behaviour policy has been established to promote positive behaviour and challenge unacceptable attitudes and language. This has encouraged pupils to make good choices and brought about a measurable reduction in incidents of poor behaviour. Older pupils have taken on the role of peer mediators, tackling minor conflicts between younger pupils at break time. Other pupils act as sports ambassadors, running lunchtime activities. This encourages good personal development and life skills for both the leaders and other pupils. The underlying principle of forgiveness and reconciliation is set out in the behaviour policy. In this way the school nurtures well-being, in line with its vision, so that everyone can flourish. Behaviour around the school is generally very good. Feedback from secondary schools has indicated that pupils are well-prepared for the next stage. Occasionally, the school has issued fixed term exclusions to manage difficult behaviour. However, the school works well with parents, establishing appropriate provision to enable pupils to be reintroduced as quickly as possible. Regular surveys and conversations canvas the views of parents, pupils and staff so that all stakeholders make a contribution to the development of school plans and decisions. In its vision to be fully inclusive, the school has adopted a gender-neutral uniform policy. The policy for sex and relationships education is aimed mainly at pupils in Years 5 and 6. It promotes affirming, healthy relationships supporting pupils' personal development.

Collective worship is planned thoroughly, offering a wide range of engaging experiences to support spiritual development. Pupils participate with enthusiasm. Themes are drawn from Diocesan plans and give everyone time to reflect on values and important issues. Pupils encounter stories and passages from the Bible and are able to talk

knowledgably about the life and teachings of Jesus. They are less confident in their understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Leaders help pupils to apply learning from worship, making it relevant to their everyday lives. A team of pupils regularly plans and leads acts of worship. They also take responsibility for ensuring that classroom reflection areas continue the weekly theme. This works well, demonstrating clear evidence of pupil engagement. Pupils also monitor worship, offering astute observations on how to improve. A tree for pupils' prayers and memories has been introduced in a courtyard, providing another space for reflection.

RE is taught by class teachers and follows the Kent Agreed Syllabus. The school has recently adopted 'Understanding Christianity', a scheme of work that explores key Christian concepts. Pupils discuss and reflect on theological ideas, critically engaging with text. They encounter specific religious vocabulary and are learning to express thoughts and opinions, sensitively, using correct terms which supports their academic and spiritual development. However, pupil attainment at higher levels in RE does not match that of other core subjects. Through age-appropriate activities, they demonstrate some understanding of how belief influences people's lives and behaviour. Pupils learn about the beliefs and practices of several world faiths, finding similarities and differences between them. Visiting places of worship such as a gurdwara, a synagogue and the local church has enriched their experience. The school has invited parents from a range of faiths to talk to classes. Regular assessment identifies gaps in pupil progress and informs ongoing planning.

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Inspector's name and number	Melanie Williams 911