

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Birchington Church of England Primary School

Vision

We strive to ensure everyone in our happy, inclusive school flourishes and feels valued and safe. Our peaceful learning environment and aspirational curriculum enables everyone to grow from their unique starting point, giving them a hopeful future. Following in Jesus' example, we forgive, respect, love and care for everyone.

"Which of you men, if you had a hundred sheep, and lost one of them, wouldn't leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one that was lost, until he found it? When he was found he carries it on his shoulders, rejoicing." Luke 15:5

Birchington Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

Strengths

- The Christian vision, rooted in the parable of 'The Lost Sheep' is a lived reality throughout the school community. It is having a clear impact, enabling pupils and staff to feel valued, grow and flourish.
- Collective worship is a special time in the school day offering moments of calm, reflection, prayer and celebration of individual gifts. Close links with the church, supports the school community and has a noteworthy impact upon pupils' and adults' spiritual development.
- Inspired by the vision, leaders ensure that staff and pupil wellbeing is a high priority throughout the school. Pupils and adults benefit from the wide-ranging pastoral support and provision for mental health and wellbeing.
- There are many planned opportunities for pupils to lead and have a voice in decision making to tackle injustice. Pupils know they make a tangible difference to the lives of others in their community and the wider world.
- Religious education (RE) is led effectively. The curriculum is well-balanced and diverse. It enables pupils to develop a deep understanding of Christianity and other world faiths and views.

Development Points

- Embed the school's approach to spiritual development so that it is incorporated across the curriculum. In this way pupils will have wider opportunities to explore and articulate their spiritual understanding.



Inspection Findings

The Christian vision is lived out in the daily life of the school. This is evident through the aspirational curriculum, pastoral care for pupils and families and strong partnerships. The vision has a significant impact on pupils and adults, enabling them to grow from their unique starting point. Leaders, including governors, know their community well. Informed by the vision, leaders place pupils at the heart of decision making. The school values associated with the vision are referenced in the life of the school. Concrete examples are evident across the school environment. This includes the distribution of pupil - designed values postcards to celebrate pupils who are living them out. Leaders have devised robust systems to monitor and evaluate the impact of the vision and plan next steps.

Inspired by the vision the school has devised a rich, challenging and inclusive curriculum, reflecting the school's context. Pupils are supported in becoming critical thinkers, which enables them to question the world around them and deepen their learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are encouraged to become resilient and independent learners. Leaders have been responsive to the needs of the community, thus creating opportunities that enable pupils to flourish. For example, a request from pupils to attend more sporting events resulted in leaders increasing the activity offer. Pupils are encouraged to develop their individual gifts through a variety of clubs and curriculum enrichment. Spirituality is present in spontaneous moments during the school day and in the curriculum. Thus, pupils gain an understanding of who they are, their connection to others, the wider world and God. However, the school's approach to spirituality is not yet consistently planned to have a deeper impact on pupils' spiritual flourishing.

Collective worship, focused on the vision and values, draws the school community together. It is an intrinsic part of the school day and week. There are many opportunities for pupils to plan and lead inspirational collective worship in class and through the 'collective worship club.' Pupils worked together with the M7V group of schools to create prayer spaces and art work linked to Bible stories. The work was celebrated in worship. This helps pupils grow in confidence and self-worth. Pupils and adults enjoy the opportunity to gather, sing, pray and reflect on the theme. Inspired by the message, pupils continue to carry this into the school day through their kindness towards others and positive behaviour. Pupils who find collective worship challenging are supported by staff. The tailoring of themes in quiet spaces enables the most vulnerable pupils to flourish spiritually. The clergy work alongside leaders to plan and lead engaging worship in the church and school. A 'café style' worship led by clergy at the end of the school day helps pupils and families feel included. Teachers are provided with training from school leaders to deliver high quality collective worship. Focused monitoring and evaluation by leaders, governors and clergy ensures ongoing developments in worship to meet the needs of the school community. Pupils and staff enjoy the opportunity to use prayer areas around the school as well as the outdoor peace spiral. They are highly valued by the staff and pupils as times of calm and reflection.

The school vision is instrumental in building a culture where pupils and adults feel included, supported, valued and are treated well. Staff and pupil wellbeing is a priority for leaders and governors. For example, staff have access to professional support and the use of a dedicated space for pause and reflection. Pupils and adults recognise that they are looked after and can share any challenges they face. In line with the vision, the school has been proactive in ensuring that no one is left behind. This is exemplified in the introduction of a breakfast club, alongside the nurture of attendance ambassadors, resulting in improved attendance. Pupils benefit from high-quality provision to support their mental health and wellbeing. This includes access to the Family Liaison Officer and the school



counsellor. This caring and nurturing approach has helped pupils to regulate their emotions and behaviour and form good relationships. The partnership between the school and the church is a strength. They work to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable in their community providing both emotional and practical support. The links with the local food bank and the provision of white goods makes families feel that they are not alone. The kindness shown by staff to pupils and parents enables families to feel they belong. Individuals speak highly of how they have been supported through difficult times.

The school has forged strong partnerships with the church, the Diocese, the M7V group of schools and the local community. Birchington has worked closely with other M7V schools on various projects. The development of prayer spaces across the group has helped pupils to develop their social skills with others. The vision is clearly linked to the school's culture of justice and responsibility. Themes of injustice are woven into the curriculum and collective worship. Pupils develop a wide view of the world through lessons, including learning about individuals working for social and environmental change. Inspired by this work, pupils reflect on injustice and how to respond. For example, a science day inspired pupil led activities to stop sea pollution. There are many opportunities for pupils to lead and have a voice in decision making to tackle injustice. Pupils wrote to the headteacher requesting a change in 100% attendance certificates as this disadvantaged those with a medical need. This led to a change in name of the certificate. They know their work around issues of injustice makes a positive difference to others, the community and the environment.

RE is prioritised across the school. Strong school and subject leadership ensure the quality and relevance of RE for pupils. The curriculum is well balanced, relevant and diverse. The teaching of Christianity and other world faiths and views widens pupils' exposure to religious and cultural diversity. Visits to Canterbury Cathedral and from a local Christian education group enhance pupils understanding of Christianity as a lived faith. The experienced RE leader benefits from training with the Diocese. The RE lead disseminates training to staff increasing their knowledge and confidence. Good quality resources are used to enhance the curriculum. Monitoring and evaluation by governors and leaders is regular and precise and identifies areas for development. Pupils speak very highly of RE and enjoy their lessons. They are proud to share their learning and realise the importance of RE in society to help them understand others.

Information

Address	Park Lane, Birchington, Kent CT7 OAS		
Date	7 May 2025	URN	118693
Type of school	Voluntary Controlled	No. of pupils	444
Diocese	Canterbury		
Headteacher	Louise Wilson		
Chair of Governors	Lorraine Bant		
Inspector	Anne-Marie Bahlol		