

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Nicholas Church of England Primary School

Address	School Road, The Common, Chislehurst, Kent, BR7 5PQ		
Date of inspection	04/07/2019	Status of school	Academy – The Aquinas Church of England Trust – inspected as Voluntary Aided
Diocese	Rochester	URN	141529
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	Excellent
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Excellent
School context			
<p>St Nicholas Primary School has 212 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is well below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages. Most pupils come from worshipping Christian family backgrounds. Since the previous denominational inspection, the school has become part of the Aquinas Trust (November 2014) and a different headteacher is in post (September 2018).</p>			
The school's Christian vision			
<p>'Our Christian community growing and learning together'</p>			
<p>To inspire all our children with the knowledge and imagination to develop their God-given potential and lead happy and fulfilling lives. To create happy and thoughtful young people who nurture wisdom, care for themselves and others, and make a difference to their communities.</p>			
Key findings			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The longstanding but refreshed Christian vision and associated values have strong theological underpinning and are confidently expressed by leadership at all levels and deeply embedded across school life. • Pastoral support for pupils and strong relationships with school families is exemplary. Pupils flourish within this happy and nurturing Christian community where their varying strengths and needs are successfully addressed. • Academic and personal development are 'two sides of the same coin' as pupils' God-given potential is supported and celebrated. Pupils are developing as confident, articulate young people. • The school's membership of its Trust and the opportunities for shared activities and mutual support for both pupils and staff make positive contributions to school development. • Collective worship supports the school's Christian vision and associated values. It contributes significantly to school life and to the spiritual development of pupils and adults. Whilst pupils do have responsibility for planning and leading worship in church, their role in planning and leading worship within school is slightly more limited. • Religious education (RE) is exemplary as exemplified through high quality teaching and strong attainment and progress. 			
Areas for development			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broaden and deepen pupils' understanding of how they can make a difference and challenge injustice in a range of ways alongside their charitable giving. • To refine worship practice by expanding the leadership role of pupils so that they plan and lead acts of worship within school more regularly. 			

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

St Nicholas' Christian vision is strongly underpinned by an effective commitment to the purpose of education within their Church of England context. The vision is aspirational and inclusive. It infuses and successfully drives developments. Its vision and well-chosen associated values are inspired by relevant biblical teaching. They are excellently articulated by staff at all levels, by pupils and by parents, who celebrate and relate them to life within school and beyond. The theological underpinning is strongly focused on God' love and on helping pupils and adults to grow together and to reach their God-given potential. High quality, mutually supportive relationships and the exemplary behaviour of pupils are explicitly recognised as consequences of the Christian vision. It also contributes powerfully to the purposeful and creative learning environment in which all are treated with dignity and respect and in which all flourish.

Attainment and progress are consistently well above national and local averages. However, the school is not complacent. Its focus on high quality teaching and, targeted interventions, when needed, means that all pupils thrive, making strong progress from their various starting points. Many are working at greater depth than is expected nationally. Its vision and associated values are shown in the commendable pastoral care provided for all. This excellent support includes well-targeted and effective individualised provision for the below average percentage of more vulnerable pupils and for their families. This means that the gap in attainment between these and their counterparts in school is small and closing. They attain higher than their peers nationally. All pupils are extremely well-known. Staff use data analysis effectively to ensure continued improvement, always remembering that, 'there is a child behind the data'. This exemplary focus on improving outcomes for all pupils, academically and personally, strongly impacts on outcomes thus reflecting the shared aspirational and inclusive vision.

Changes since the previous denominational inspection have been excellently and constructively handled and key areas for development have been productively addressed. The Trust, through its structures and individualised assistance, provides excellent support and challenge for continued improvements. St Nicholas' Aquinas Advisory Council practically and effectively supports the school. The new headteacher is successfully building on her predecessor's work. She is energising and revitalising school life through her focused and collegiate leadership. This includes a refreshing of the Christian vision to successfully build on the past and go forward into the next stage of development. This is very well supported by robust and continuous self-evaluation that contributes positively to senior staff and the Trust knowing their school extremely well. Consequently, priorities for development are very well focused.

The wide-ranging curriculum enables pupils academic and personal growth and is enriched through a rich extra-curricular offer. Trust membership provides opportunity for pupils to be involved in sporting and other activities with partner schools. This includes an innovative speaking competition which was initiated by St Nicholas and is now a Trust-wide event.

Spiritual development is of fundamental importance and a key contributor in enhancing personal and academic development. Pupils are effectively encouraged to consider 'big questions' and relate their learning to life in school and beyond. Thus, it impacts on the development of their character and on the choices that they make. They openly share their ideas and listen respectfully to others' views. Prayer, silence and reflection are strong elements of school life. Pupils respond extremely positively, and are flourishing as confident, open-minded young people who value themselves, their learning and each other. The staff are excellently supported for working in this Church of England school. Their wellbeing, like that of the pupils and families, is essential to school life. Staff at all levels speak confidently and passionately about how the Christian vision underpins their work and supports them personally and professionally.

Charitable giving is a clear expression of living out the Christian vision of making a difference in communities. Pupils appreciate the need to care for others, 'just like Jesus did'. They also know that, 'it's not all about money but spending time with someone who is lonely is also charitable'. Children are involved in litter picking on the common and one child has had her hair cut and donated it to a children's cancer charity. A newly formed Eco Committee is beginning to address issues of pollution and conservation in God's world. However, broader ways of addressing equality and justice and of 'making a difference' are not as well understood or articulated.

Collective worship and RE have high significance and both areas meet statutory requirements. The expectations of the Church of England Statement for Entitlement for RE are fully reflected in policy and practice. The use of a

diocesan worship plan impacts appropriately on ongoing developments. Close monitoring by senior leaders and pupils shows impact on refining practice.

Worship is inclusive and enables pupils and staff apply the vision and associated values to life in school and beyond. Thus, it is engaging and inspiring. Singing during worship is enjoyed because, 'it feels good' and 'helps you reflect on God and on Jesus'. Biblical teaching and various Anglican worship practices are well-embedded. Worship is enhanced through the regular involvement of parish clergy and lay people, the local Methodist minister and others, including the Spinnaker Trust, a Christian charity which supports worship in a range of primary schools. Recently, the school choir took part in Sunday worship at a nearby Anglican church.

A biblical focus is apparent through worship and key Christian festivals and beliefs are well understood and applied. This means that pupils have a good knowledge of Bible stories and understand the centrality of Jesus for Christians. Their appreciation of the concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is well expressed. Pupils are strongly involved in planning and leading worship that takes place in the parish church but their involvement in planning and leading worship within school is not as well developed.

The RE curriculum is very well led and planned, drawing on and adapting the diocesan scheme of work appropriately. Assessment practice is increasingly used by teachers to help them refine their practice. It consistently helps pupils to reflect on their next steps in learning. RE constructively extends the school's Christian vision and associated values as affirmed by staff and seen in pupils' work. The effective practice in RE is positively enhanced through the work of the Trust and through regular attendance at diocesan RE leader support meetings.



The effectiveness of RE is Excellent

RE teaching is excellently focused on encouraging pupils' enjoyment and learning, leading to a wide range of supportive and challenging activities that strongly engage pupils. Effective in-school and Trust monitoring takes place regularly, reflecting its core status. This leads to ongoing development. Attainment and progress are high, being at least in line with and often above other core subjects. There are creative approaches to teaching about a range of world faiths, including Christianity, Judaism and Sikhism. Moral and ethical issues linked to religious teachings are explored productively. This means that written and display work in RE is strong, as is the quality of oral work. Through applying their learning, they reflect deeply on the impact of beliefs and practices for others and for their own lives. Because of the high priority given to RE, and strong engagement from pupils in responding to effective teaching, pupils flourish both academically and personally.

Headteacher

Sophie Sear

Inspector's name and number

Pamela Draycott (161)