

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Sutton-at-Hone Church of England Primary School

Address Church Road, Sutton-at-Hone, Dartford, Kent, DA4 9EX

Christian vision

“We are God’s family – learning together, loving together, growing together – striving to be the best we can be for ourselves, for God and for others.”

‘Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it?’ (Luke 15:4)

‘I am the Good Shepherd’ (John 10:11)

School strengths

- The school’s Christian vision is transformational and underpins everything the school does. School leaders, governors and trust leaders are committed to ensuring that ‘no child is left behind’. They have made bold decisions to ensure that the vision specifically serves its community well, with equity at the core.
- Collective worship is an inspirational time of spiritual flourishing, with the school vision at the heart of it. It is engaging and is deeply valued by all. Pupil leaders take a consultative role in evaluating worship and school leaders, including governors, monitor with insight and expertise.
- The school is a family that treats its members well. They take their responsibility of ‘taking care of each other’ seriously as this helps everyone in their ‘striving to be the best’. Pupils behave exceptionally.
- Spiritual development is a key priority of the school. Discussion and questioning are used skilfully to develop pupils’ understanding. Pupils, even as young as those in the early years, are inquisitive and thoughtful and engage with big questions in an insightful way.
- The school’s Christian vision drives high quality religious education (RE) provision. The creative mediums that are used as a vehicle for curiosity and learning are varied and highly engaging, allowing all pupils to flourish. High levels of expertise and skill of staff develop pupils’ understanding in a very effective way.

Areas for development

- Continue to develop a shared language and understanding of spirituality. This is so that pupils have increasingly deeper opportunities to explore and articulate their own spiritual development.
- Extend the rich opportunities for pupils to be involved in the leading of collective worship so that they continue to flourish spiritually.

Inspection findings

The school’s Christian vision is all encompassing. It is inclusive and serves each adult and pupil exceptionally well. The school community is enabled to flourish. Rooted in the parable of the lost sheep, leaders are relentless and passionate about not leaving anyone behind. Barriers to learning are eradicated so that none are ‘lost’. Leaders and adults emulate Jesus, ‘the Good Shepherd’, in their work with pupils. Out of this moral

purpose, they serve and show care, concern and compassion. Leaders have responded proactively to the diverse needs of pupils and see them as individuals. They will readily invest and extend resources to ensure that tailored provision is given. All pupils are genuinely celebrated as part of God's family. All learn, love and grow together. Expectations and aspirations are high. Pupils believe they can achieve anything and truly strive for excellence. The school's unique context and vision is actively supported and further enriched by the trust's vision. Adults feel valued. They feel that leaders empower them to thrive and not just cope. Their wellbeing is a priority. Parents see the setting as 'more than a school'. They see the vision coming to life for their children and preparing them for a bright future. Pupils take pride in knowing that they can always identify at least one improvement they can make each day. Trust-wide staff and student voice groups, community concerts, storytelling and public speaking opportunities build tolerance and understanding. All helps the local school see and feel that they are truly part of God's family and this family is far reaching, inclusive and enriching.

The school's curriculum is a springboard for the flourishing of pupils, no matter their starting point. Love, care and support is at the heart of the provision for all pupils. This includes those who are vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils flourish extremely well and are known deeply. The use of sensory circuits before the school day is an excellent example of how the school caters to individual needs. Pupils support each other and actively live out their role as the 'Good Shepherd' to ensure that all flourish. The school's use of strategies to promote cooperation, communication and pupil engagement is transformational. These strategies develop the curriculum principles of curiosity, independence, resilience, creativity and aspiration. Opportunities to ask and answer big questions also contribute to pupils' spiritual development. Children as young as early years are encouraged to explore spirituality, awe and wonder with questions such as 'what's been a wow moment?' Pupils complete the daily mile, during which stillness and reflection is encouraged. They are encouraged to appreciate how incredible nature is. This is done with the 'sunrise of wonder' and the forest school within the school's grounds. Prayer and reflection is commonplace. Pupils see prayer as a way to talk to God as part of his family. School leaders are planning to enhance the spiritual development strategy even further.

Collective worship is valued by the entire school community. It is here that the hearts and minds of pupils and adults meet around the school's Christian vision. An exploration of how this vision is lived out through the school's values is a powerful part of worship. Values such as community, love, service, forgiveness, perseverance and thankfulness are explored for all pupils to access and understand. Pupils bring home the inspirational messages and teachings and parents feel enriched by this. The balance between traditional Anglican liturgical elements as well as more contemporary expression is well placed. Pupil leadership is exemplary in this area. The 'Leading Lights' plan, lead and evaluate worship inclusively and inspirationally. They are role models to younger pupils and through their leadership, pupils' confidence has built. Pupils feel close to God in collective worship and there is an acknowledgement that all are on their own spiritual journey. Worship is fully inclusive, allowing pupils and adults of all faiths and none to participate with integrity. Music plays an integral role. Pupils sing vibrantly and enthusiastically. The local church plays a very active role in worship and the wider life of the school. The local vicar attends worship each day. They also play a consultative supportive role in ensuring collective worship enables the flourishing of all. Weekly 'Toast and Worship' allows parents to experience worship and cultivates a curiosity and flourishing of faith. Through engagement in school worship, many pupils encourage their parents to participate in the wider spiritual life of the church. Pupil voice is intrinsic to the development and impact of worship.

The vision positively impacts the behaviour and conduct of the pupils. Pupils behave exceptionally. There is a strong culture of love and respect for each other. Pupils believe that all are made in God's image. Pupils' ability to discuss and reflect varied and divergent views is impressive. They disagree well. Pupils' and adults' wellbeing is important to school leaders, with significant interventions to enhance this. The school is a family that treats its members well.

Pupils appreciate the need for justice. They understand their role within the context of the vision, striving to be the best we can 'for others'. They engage in a number of active campaigns and causes. This is to ensure the vision is being lived out not only by their school, but also the global community. Their desire to make the right

decisions socially and environmentally are encouraged in the classroom and through extra-curricular activities. Pupils understand that other members of the world who are part of God’s family don’t have equal access to education. Through raising awareness, pupils want to see this change. Environmental regeneration projects and wider prayers and fundraising initiatives for the war in Ukraine are typical of the work pupils engage in. They flourish in compassion and empathy and see a responsibility to take care of their community and their world.

RE flows inspirationally from the Christian vision. Subject knowledge is sequenced effectively. The creative use of role play, music and moving image inspire pupils to enjoy RE. Pupils learn about a range of world faiths and are encouraged to think deeply. A focus on ‘why’ people of various faiths do what they do, enables pupils to support and celebrate each other. World faith immersion days are particularly special occasions. Pupils and adults can engage with world faiths and world views in a deeper, profound way.

Pupils achievement in RE is strong and routinely surpasses expectations. All pupils make good progress, including those who have SEND. The level of reflection and evaluation that takes place in RE is of a high quality. Pupils flourish in their philosophical and sociological awareness. Robust and regular assessments inform teaching. Lessons are well structured and highly responsive to pupils’ needs.

The inspection findings indicate that Sutton-at-Hone Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school, and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish.

Information

School	Sutton-at-Hone VA Church of England Primary School				
URN	144910	Pupils on roll	409	VA/VC/Academy	Academy
Diocese/Circuit	Rochester				
Multi academy trust	Alethia Anglican Academies Trust				
Headteacher	Karen Trowell				
Chair	Mark Till				
Inspector	Andrew Wignal			No.	2118
Date of Inspection	21 September 2023				